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THE PERFECT LIFE

SERMONS

BY

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF WORCESTER AND VICAR OF HOAR CROSS

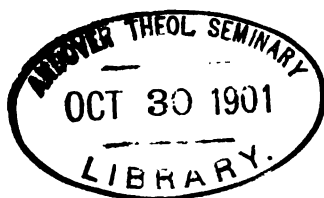
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39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1898

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52,264

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SERMON I.

The Perfect Life.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—ST. MATT. v. 48.

THUS in a few full words our Lord concentrates the essence of His teaching. This is His way. He does not explain everything, nor dilate at length upon a theme; but constantly says something at once strong and pregnant, on which the human mind must exercise itself if the truth is fully to be got at. We are almost inclined to resent this method at times. He could, we think, have told us everything, and explained everything, and He did not. No, He did not. No explanation, He knew, would be of the slightest use to those who would not bend their souls to His enlightening grace, or exert the power of thought He gave them. No explanation would be needed to those who entered into the Divine presence chamber, and communed with Him on Truth. “He that had ears to hear would hear.” Here, then, is a hard saying, as it appears, at first sight; but it is the concentrated essence, the gathering up, of His own sublime teaching.

The “Sermon on the Mount” is the moral code of Christianity. Its setting, too, is worthy of its matchless

subject-matter. The multitudes were gathered in the cup of land on the high hillside above the lake. The preacher stood upon the mass of rock. The day went on and drew towards evening. The lazy breezes crept across the bending grasses of the hillside, and just ruffled the smooth surface of the lake below. The boats lay heaving dreamily below the cliff, and the lap of the quiet waves brought peaceful and soothing messages up against the wind. The shadows of the ridge lengthened along the lake; the birds wheeled round and round before settling to their rest; the golden sunset from the west touched grass and rocks with glow of glory; the flowers—"the lilies of the field"—began to close to their nightly sleep. Everything was calm, and still, and peaceful, and beautiful—with all the beauty, and stillness, and calm, of an Eastern evening. But fairer, more beautiful than all, more soothing and more ennobling were the sweet strong face of the preacher, and his wonderful words. He touched the very quick of moral truth; He drew out principles of universal and eternal importance; He unfolded a moral code all-comprehending, and yet in suggested completeness of detail; and then *raised* men's minds by an unexpected touch here and there—such as that of the text—taking all duties *in*, in their consequence and purpose with one wide armsweep, as He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

I.

Every one has long agreed that the teaching of the sermon on the mount is the fullest statement we possess of the moral code of Christianity. So distinct in man's

soul is the sense of the beauty of Right, that men have not been able to withhold their admiration from it; but they have sometimes unwisely asked to have it without all that makes it so valuable. "Tell us," say they, "of the high morality of Christianity, and the great thought as it came from Christ, and leave out your talk about dogma, and about His person and place in the scale of being." To leave out this would be almost to leave out all, for the authority of the Christian code is derived from the fact that it springs from Him, who has the power and the knowledge to supply it.

A good deal of the teaching in the great sermon is directly connected with Judaism. Primarily it was addressed to the Jewish people, and it deals with various subjects, which are in the first instance, and directly, connected with their customs and laws. It touches upon the laws in relation to murder, to adultery, to divorce, to swearing, to revenge, to mental attitude towards enemies in a way which, at first sight, is very Jewish indeed. Facts as they stand are taken for granted; customs and traditions are accepted; the Temple, for instance, and "Cæsar" and an exception—purely Jewish—to the Divine law of marriage, are spoken of almost as if they were permanent institutions, though the Divine lawgiver knew well that He would sweep them all away. But what He did was this; He raised the standard of moral conception in the minds of His hearers, even when He accepted what was passing almost as if it were permanent. He called them back to feel how they had failed, even according to their own limited standard. He corrected abuses, and in doing so, He threw life and reality into things which had

been becoming dead forms. He did more; He suggested inner meanings, which would hold and have power after the partial and the passing had been swept away, so that even the parts of His teaching which seemed most Jewish, were preparing the way for that which was of wider application. Whatever Jewish forms or standards were referred to, therefore, the sermon on the mount is, indeed, the code of Christian morality.

For its teaching is not only Jewish, it is above all things Catholic. All through, there runs an under-current of permanent principles, and every now and again these—like Pindar's notion of the river which ran under land and sea from Greece, and came up in sparkling freshness and beauty in the Sicilian fountain of Arethusa—these principles and truths burst up and sparkle in life and brightness, with a power and attractiveness of a new revelation. Not unnaturally, there are many truths in the sermon on the mount which have appeared in other codes of morality put forward by other religions. Not unnaturally, I say, for after all there is but one Teacher to mankind, and that is the Eternal Word—"The light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." That Teacher has taught men in every age as man would learn; but here the same great Teacher puts forth in fullest form those high moral laws which, in one way or another, He had to some extent imprinted on the minds of His creatures. Here is the complete statement; here is the comprehensive view.

The traveller climbing the mountain turns from time to time to gaze with delight on the landscape spread out before him. But when he has reached the crown of the crest, he is able to see all round the lie of the country—the rivers and the woods, the hills and the sea—and, still

more, to realize how one part is connected with another, and how what seemed separate and partial makes up a beautiful whole.

So it is with the Christian code of morality as put forth by Christ; there is a completeness and a finish about it, there is a wide sweep in it, there is an absence of the admixture of what taints and tarnishes, which lifts it above all other codes. Above all, there is, as in the text, the expression of some commanding principle which dominates and illuminates the whole.

"Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

II.

And, first of all, it is to be noted that here is a comprehensive view of the conduct of life. It is taken for granted by the preacher, that man has been admitted into the secret of his destiny, and holds, so to speak, his fate in his own hands. He has to work at many things, but certainly and above all he has to work at himself. Life, then, is given, not merely for the purpose of action or feeling, of enjoyment or suffering, not merely for what we may *do*, but for what we may *be*. Again, the saying of the text is an appeal to man's nobler self. He is reminded by it that he comes of a splendid lineage; that he has a Father of whom he need not be ashamed, and whom he ought not to allow to be ashamed of him. It is an appeal to the principle of *noblesse oblige*. Man must not fall below his parentage; he is to carry in his mind the source from whence he came, and he is to take pains to act accordingly. The great preacher, like all true teachers, is not bent upon denunciation, so much as

upon encouragement; not bent upon laying down rules from without, so much as upon wakening up the sense of possible greatness within. For, indeed, in every man there is something noble which, if we can only touch or awaken it, responds to the noblest thoughts and the greatest things. We are fallen indeed, but we carry with us the memories and the marks—like some lost scion of an ancient house—of a splendid and not wholly obliterated Past.

Indeed there are two ideas which seem very prominent in our Lord's thought. The one is the greatness of life. For a human life, after all, is a great thing; it is an opportunity for fighting a serious battle, an opportunity for fulfilling a laborious task, an opportunity for enduring or suffering numberless passing joys and sorrows, an opportunity for exercising influence upon other souls, an opportunity for making truth and duty our own, but an opportunity, above all, for learning the mysterious science of loving, which brings us most close to the *Caritas Dei*, the love of God.

And the other chief idea seems to be the sweetness and beauty of perfection. We are so familiarized, in a sad world like ours, with the constant imperfections of our ways of thought and modes of action, that we are apt to forget that nothing short of perfection is the standard towards which we must aim. And yet God's perfection is witnessed to, all round us, in a thousand ways. The marvels of the microscope, as well as the wonders of the telescope, are constantly teaching us how *perfectly* balanced and how delicately adjusted are things in what we call the material world. Our spiritual eyes are too fast closed, for the most part, at present to allow us to realize the same perfection of adjustment in the spiritual

world. But we know that behind the material phenomena which meet our senses there are wonderful spiritual powers. We gain dim glimpses from science of the action of forces which we label, because we cannot see them nor understand; we gain dim glimpses from revelation of the mysterious world of angels and spirits and saints. We know that Order is the law of God's creation, strangely broken up here and there by human sin, and restored only by Divine compassion. But, in spite of all our faults and sins, we have a yearning after, and a sense of, the glory of, Perfection. Wherein lies the power of splendid and mysterious music? Wherein the attractiveness of true poetry? Wherein the fascination of real art? Wherein the sense of the beauty of the human form, when it is beautiful? They all remind us of the yearning and longing in the human soul for things that are higher than the mere commonplace; they all remind us that we are born with a fund of illimitable aspirations, which it is our business at once to nurse and to be ruled by; which remind us that nothing merely failing or passing, much less anything tainted and sinful, can *satisfy*; that we have within us a sense which witnesses that there is such a thing as perfection, and that short of it we cannot permanently find our rest. To this sense our Lord appeals, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

III.

"Perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect?" At first hearing, this seems transcendental and impossible. The moment we think, however, the statement changes its aspect. Our Lord—the Eternal Reason—always spoke

as a reasonable man to reasonable men ; He knew, and He took for granted, that we, as reasonable beings, would remember that He knew that God's perfection in its *kind* is quite impossible for us ; for God is God, and we are the creatures of His hand. But perfection, our Lord would teach us, is a mark or characteristic of God in natural accordance with the nature and character of His being, and the perfection to which we are urged by Christ, is not to be a God-like perfection. Such a perfection of course for us would be quite impossible, which in its *kind* must be a human perfection, though in *degree* it may rise to the highest heights possible for it ; and if we are aiming at that highest possible perfection, we are really aiming at being perfect, as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect." We may see this in two ways.

1. First of all it must be clearly our duty to avoid, as far as may be, those temptations which would tend to pull us down, and make us live below what we really can be. I do not mean that we are to disturb ourselves overmuch if we do not rise entirely to the level of our ideals, for a man's reach may well exceed his grasp, or "What's a heaven for ?"

But I do mean that we are enabled to see with a fair amount of clearness, and taking into account the experiences we have had, what we *can* unquestionably do and be. A great danger to the spiritual life, is the seeing clearly enough what is quite possible for us without,

"Winding ourselves too high
For sinful men beneath the sky."

and yet from slackness of will, not attempting to rise to this. Indeed, it is by briskness and trying to act up to a very humble standard which is evidently

possible, and trying again and again to overcome some little and evident faults, and to avoid to the utmost, the temptations which lead to them, that we really get on. And if we are really avoiding these temptations to the best of our power, and brightly and briskly doing our duties, so as not to fall below what we *can* most evidently do and be, we are so far forth rising up to that perfection of the Father of which our Lord speaks. As we look out into a world like this, and see such varying characters and such mixtures of motives, it is a great consolation to feel, how much wonderful, simple, and real goodness there is of this kind. In any case, if we cannot rise to the highest things, and if we fear, in entire sincerity, the danger of attempting to go beyond our grace, we must as a matter of duty watch and pray to avoid those temptations which tend to lead us away from doing and being what we *can* do and be.

2. But again, this may be put in a less negative, or, rather, I should say, a distinctly positive form. For, indeed, we are truly imitating the perfection of the Father, only when we try steadily to form habits of doing our best. God is always at His best. He is the very essence of perfection; His perfect knowledge, perfect power, above all perfect love and goodness, are necessary constituents of what He is. So clearly is His mind reflected in ours that we cannot conceive an *imperfect* God; unconsciously we refer all things to a standard of absolute perfection, which we can only think of as being God.

When our Lord, then, gives us as a standard of conduct—the perfection of the Father—He would have us learn that we are to be content with nothing short of

doing our *best*. Our best may be a very bad best. It must vary exceedingly according to the variation of gifts, and circumstances, and training, and opportunity, and all those many and complex influences which go to make up life. The arena on which it is played will very often be a very different one from that on which others act. The subject-matter of our lives will frequently be of a wholly different character from that of the lives of others; but still the truth remains true for each, that we can take all the pains in our power to see clearly the path before us, that we can cultivate a loyal will—loyal to truth, loyal to our best convictions—so as to follow out that path.

The circumstances of life, indeed, are very varied, but the main principles are strangely simple. They apply to every one and everywhere; they are those strong truths which stand unchanged like the mighty mountains as the gusts of circumstance and accident sweep across them. To learn these, to adhere to these, to make them part of the texture of our habits of thought and action, to infuse them into all our energies, to be loyal to them whatever else may fail, to allow them thus to become first the power of act, and then the power of habit, is—with whatever frailties and faults from past mistakes from fallen nature—to be learning habitually to *do our best*, and to do our best is one of the greatest of things. Little it matters in the long run, that is, in the eternal life which lies before us, what our particular course of training, what our special place and trial may be here; but what *does* matter, is that we have been making a faithful effort to act nobly and dutifully in it—that we have, in fact, on the whole been true to the teaching of conscience, and been *doing*

our best, for that is, indeed; in a very high sense, being perfect "even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Then further, there is one main rule of life, set before us by our blessed Lord—that is, the Will of God—He came not to do His own will: He "pleased not Himself!" the perfection and glory of His manhood, and His human action, was this; that He was always expressing in the world the will of His Father. For that will is the perfection of goodness, and to follow it is the perfection of right-doing, and therefore of happiness. As in the case of Christ, so it was in the case of His disciples. They realized a special character, the character which they described as a "Servant of God;" to them it appeared in the highest sense—a higher sense than we can probably attain to—the most natural thing in the world, to place their time, their thought, their means, their abilities, their health, their strength—*themselves* in fact, and all that they had, at the disposal of another. They *felt* the truth which we know to be true, but which we find it so difficult to feel—that they were creatures and owed themselves to their Creator. The ordinary desires of a fallen nature are apt to lead us wrong; but the more we realize things as they are, we learn that—even when it appears trying for the moment to flesh and blood—to do God's will is the only real rule of life. That will, in particular instances or crises, may appear dark or clouded, but on the whole we are well aware of what it is. We have the Church, and the Bible, and the providences and circumstances of life to guide us; and the desire to do His will, nourished in our souls and kept before us, is at least one step on the path of perfection.

And this, of course, has to be applied by us all to

common duties. It is one of the most remarkable things in the life and action of St. Paul, for instance, that while he rises to the highest heights of Divine contemplation, while he enters into the deepest mysteries of God, while he grasps with a firm grip the different parts of the Faith, he always turns the marvellous revelation given to him to practical purpose in common life. He never abates anything from the seriousness and severity of Divine revelation, only he reminds his hearers that just because of that seriousness, and severity, common duties are to be well done. If he teaches his converts of the mystery hidden from the beginning of the world; if he reminds them that the unseen powers in heavenly places are to learn through the Church, the counsels of God, all these wonderful revelations are sure to end with him in the necessity of wives and husbands loving one another, of children obeying their parents, of parents not provoking their children to wrath, of servants serving their masters, as in the sight of God. There are one of two ways in which good men are apt to deal with Divine revelation, either—as is too commonly the case in our own days—they are inclined to drag down revelation, so to speak, in the mire, to suit the whims of men, or they try to lift up human life into the light and warmth of revelation. This latter was the way of St. Paul: the most common things to him became sacred, because of the marvellous efforts made for man by God, because of the marvellous mysteries involved in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. It is thus that the doing of common duties, that the desire to fulfil the will of God, becomes a noble and Divine thing, and is a real part, and a most serious part, of what our Lord would call the Perfect

Life. For the spirit of submission to the will of God is indeed a part of real faith. It comes from that increasing conviction that amidst all the changes and chances of this mortal life, our Father in heaven knows best, and that we are under His constant guardianship, and the object of His penetrating care. In one way this does not alter the trials of life; in another way it does. It makes them the highest forces in training character.

IV.

For what our Lord insists upon continually, and especially in the sermon on the mount, is that character is everything. All the efforts made by any religious system are really made to mould and form character. The law of Christ is indeed a distinct, and in some respects, a severe law. There are certain things that He requires us to do; there are certain commands that must be observed by a Christian. Such commands, as the observance of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, the receiving of the Communion, are distinct and emphatic, and must be obeyed. But it ought never to be forgotten that these commands are given with an ultimate design. Our Lord urges on us not so much what we are to *do*—although He does urge that—as what we are to *be*. He came to remake a fallen and ruined race, by His example, by His sacrifice, by the supply of His power. His work has been to restore man to the image and likeness of God. It is Christian character, therefore, above all things, upon which stress is laid by Him.

There are, therefore, two governing thoughts which present themselves to the mind in relation to the Perfect

Life. In the first place, there is the thought of duty : this is one of the greatest and most serious thoughts that can be presented to us. We are so constituted that it is part of our very nature that we *must* work for an end and object. Man is always looking forward ; he cannot help it. To look forward, in some sense to live in the future, is to be a human being ; as far as we can observe, this is either not the case, or very imperfectly the case with the lower creatures. But man is ever looking to an end : there are, of course, immediate ends which must command the attention of all of us. Some of these properly command that attention ; some of them absorb it in a much greater degree than they ought. Whatever immediate ends we have before us—whether they be money, or success, or reputation, or the love of friends, or the pleasures of life, there is one mark upon them all—they are passing. And man is so great that he cannot be satisfied with anything short of the permanent. The moment he wakens up to things as they are, he must be looking onward to an end beyond. There is no end beyond, as we all know perfectly well, which can be reckoned upon as being at once changeless and enduring, but God. Everything that is really good and beautiful in this world is His gift, and is meant to teach us of Him, and to lead us nearer to Himself. The trust that by grace we put in Him now, is a foretaste of the rest, and satisfaction that we may expect to find in Him hereafter. We can each of us say, “He, the perfect One, is my end.” It is this which especially marks the Christian character, that it aims at nothing short of God ; it is this which gives it its boundless resources, and which has enabled it to achieve so many triumphs.

If this be so, if God be our end, out of this there comes, in the clearest way, the great thought of duty. We are out on the open sea now, but it is not a sea all sunshine and smiles; there are not only the surging waves of life, but also "the looming bastions" of threatening clouds; constituted as we are, duty is a severe thought. On the one hand, we are influenced to an incalculable extent by desire. In this there is nothing wrong, but for the fact that our desires have been perverted by the Fall. We all know too well how much of sloth and how much of wilfulness enters into life; we know that there is a Divine order of the world; we know that that order is under the guidance of a Father, who is clear of all stain, and caprice, and ignorance. We know that if He be our end, nothing can be so consonant to our nature as to help in advancing that Divine order; that nothing is so blessed as to see that we unite earth and heaven, that our action and our thought be in accordance with the striking formula in our Lord's Prayer, "As in heaven so on earth." And yet we are only too well aware that this is often enough not the case, that the rule of life in the ungodly heart is "what I *like*," while the rule of the life of the Godly must be "what I *ought*." When our Lord exhorts us then to the Perfect Life, one of the greatest thoughts that He brings before us is—not indeed the desire to imitate our Father in heaven in some unreal way outside our nature and beyond our capacities—but to strive to follow His perfections in the way most possible, and most entirely conformable to our nature, viz. *to do our duty*.

And we must remember that in this, as in other things, the law of habit comes in. Character can never

be formed, except by the formation of habits; and habits are formed slowly but surely. They are formed by acts, frequently repeated, whether they be interior acts or exterior. The real use of education in its highest sense is the guidance of souls in the formation of habits. We know how readily in small things a habit, as we say, grows upon people, and how constantly parents and teachers are obliged to correct the young in small things—if they do their duty—lest bad habits should be formed. Again, prowess in games, or dexterity in works of craftsmanship and art, depend very much indeed upon the formation of a habit. But there are habits of mind and habits of spirit quite as truly as habits of body. A foreign tongue is acquired by the careful cultivation of habit; and it is in accordance with the law of habit that diligence wins its reward. Men can easily, then, form habits of a spiritual character. We know, alas! too well from observation, perhaps sometimes from experience, how easy it is to form a habit of doing that which men in the present day seem far too bent upon—living without God in the world. In a word, then, to cultivate the habit of duty—duty to God and therefore duty to man, duty in little things as well as in great, not the “what do I like,” but the “what ought I to think or do”—is to cultivate a fundamental principle in the Perfect Life.

V.

And then there is that further thought which is implied by what we have already said: there is the thought of liberty. Our Lord takes for granted that we may be or not be “perfect as our Father which is

in heaven is perfect." We may lead the perfect life, because we are equally free not to lead it, if so we please. No one but ourselves can ever shackle our interior liberty. Men may bind the body with chains or cords; they may place us in the restraint of prison walls, but no man can shackle the thought and will. We are the only ones who have it in our power to interfere with the freedom of our wills; we may chain them and restrain them by sinful habits. An inalienable possession of the creature is his freedom of will. It is certainly true, as I have implied, that we may break or injure our wills by our own sins, and it is a very solemn thought; but it still remains true, that we can and may re-assert our liberty, although, where sin has been permitted, there may be needed an immense exertion to do so. It has been truly said, that before a man is a citizen, he is a person; that we hesitate and deliberate and think, before we resolve, because of the freedom of will that is in us.

It is on this liberty and this relation to God which implies duty, that rests the science of the Perfect Life. Slowly, indeed, it may be, that science is acquired, for we are fallen creatures; and it is, after all, in short words, therefore, the science of sacrifice. So strong are our desires, so fierce the assaults of temptation, so completely is nature a ruin, that it might appear a hopeless task to acquire that science for such as we. It is, however, nothing of the kind. We cannot forget that if our Lord gave us a moral code, He has supplied strength to fulfil its requirements. Let us, then, never forget the greatness of life, the beauty of perfection, the dignity of having it more and more in our own power to be like God. Let us remember the great gift of liberty, the

solemn appeal of duty, and the high uses to which life may be put, if we only aim high, as our Master would have us. Let us, in plain words, do our best, cultivating more and more a trust in our Father which is in heaven, who desires our perfection, and using more and more the unfathomable funds of grace which are offered to us to help us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON II.

The Object of Life.

“He had this testimony, that he pleased God.”—**HEB.** xi. 5.

WE are, then, all called to “The Perfect Life.” It is a mistake to suppose that the Gospel, in using the language it does use, is speaking in exaggeration, or indulging in rhetorical flights far above the heads of men. If we are warned of the necessary effort to “be perfect,” it is that we should be like God, not indeed in the mystery and magnificence of His awful nature—which would be absurd—but in a corresponding faithfulness to the high requirements of the nature He has given to ourselves, and—when injured by the Fall—re-endowed with grace.

There must, of course, be many and varying duties and requirements laid upon many Christians whose lives are led under very different conditions. As time goes on, more and more complex becomes life in human society, more and more Divine, therefore, the actual occupations of Christians. It is not, however, in the details of life that the main difference must lie; it is in the spirit and temper, in the motive powers, in the principles which rule the life. To the prince and the peasant, to the costermonger and the parson, to the labouring man and

the student and recluse alike the call comes—with the unflinching claim of Christianity upon all—to lead the Perfect Life.

It is perfectly true that the Church has always recognized a special call to a special generosity of self-surrender in those who embrace what is known as "The Religious Life." For them it has been felt that there are certain "evangelical counsels" which are not imposed, as of necessity, upon all. "The Three Vows" of religious orders have been looked upon as *their* special guides to "perfection." They have been considered to be called to a high and generous form of self-surrender in embracing the vows of Poverty, Celibacy (often described, rather absurdly, as "Chastity"; for *all* Christians are bound to "Chastity") and Obedience. These solemn vows are intended to remove obstacles likely to impede the soul's progress to *their* form of perfection. Those who embrace "The Religious Life," even though it often frees them from many trials and anxieties incident to the Christian life in the world—indeed, are, when they are faithful to their vocation, worthy of all honour. They have been submissive to a Divine call of high importance; they are free, as St. Paul would appear to think, to devote themselves more whole heartedly than others to direct spiritual work; they have shown themselves, by Divine grace, capable of a very lofty generosity in putting aside, for God's sake, much that is very dear to—even exalted—human nature, and they are deserving of honour and gratitude from other Christians. *The* important point, however, in this connexion, is that they have been faithful to *that* form of the perfect life to which it has pleased God to call them. We, whatever our special calling may be, in this must follow their example.

It is worth while pausing for a moment to remember how good God has been to us in these vocations. Failures in the past; the natural jealousies of English minds as to anything that might be imagined to be strained, or extravagant, or pretentious, for long deprived the English Church of the ministrations of "religious." All that has passed. The Sisters of Charity are recognized servants and helpers of the work of our Church now. Vocations have been among men, and noble work done in consequence—and still more largely among women. Great work has, thereby, been done for others, and those who have done it have been themselves treading the path of perfection marked out for *them* by God.

But, then, self-consecration, in some form or other, must be a principle which should rule a Christian by the very terms of his Baptism. This is true for *all* lives, not merely for lives guided by "religious" vows. We are born into a very awful and mysterious world. We find ourselves with certain natural gifts and opportunities which help, at least in some measure, to determine our natural course; but more than that. We may not pretend to know all God's counsels in governing His own world. We may not certainly dogmatise as to the mystery of His actions towards those who are outside the Christian covenant. For baptised Christians, however, we do know, within limits, the Divine design. "Baptised into Jesus Christ," we "have put on Christ." Our intimate union through Christ with God, on the one hand, with our fellow Christians on the other, requires loyalty to our "calling." The details of that calling may be, must be, very varying. The calling itself is the same. We must endeavour to "walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called." We must have an

object before us, commensurate in height and power to so great a calling. We must, surely, in any case, have as one aim of life—the effort to please God.

II.

“He had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Here is the Scripture witness to the holy patriarch. We know from the words of the epistle that the root and spring of this greatness was faith. For the Christian’s life of perfection this is of course indispensable. It is the foundation of our religion ; without it pleasing God would be impossible. Faith, as we know from our Lord’s teaching, and from the example of the saints, gives courage. “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.” More, it is the power which enables men to dare and to endure ; and naturally, for it is that form or faculty of the soul by which invisible things become present, by which what is in the regions of the unseen, and only hoped for by the soul, becomes plain and certain and energetic and, so to speak, visible.

It is thus that faith defeats the world, it has the secret of the strongest of all things, the passive virtues. It can indeed withstand and attack, but still more, it can endure. It is faith which has led men along one path or another of difficulty or peril, and led them with success. As by it Noah toiled at his ark, and Abraham left his own country, so by it Enoch was pure in an evil generation ; but one clear outcome of a living faith in all was this—all who lived by faith had a steady aim and single and overpowering object in life. They lived to please God.

III.

And, indeed, for any great and valuable life there needs a definite aim.

The moods of mind are very variable. We are all subjected to the law of change. In the innermost seat of our being we have indeed an unchanging identity, but all else is changing. Slowly and imperceptibly, but surely, the body passes on from childhood to youth, from youth to advancing age. The mind grows to maturity and then declines, carrying with it often as its only possessions vague, or sad, or tender memories. The strong opinions of to-day have to-morrow faded down to the colour and texture of a dream. History itself is a record of change. What is it but a sad, a pathetic storehouse of what recurs indeed in the principles and habits of human nature, but of what itself, in its main outlines, has ceased to be. The fashions which *possessed* the Past are the mere quaint recollections gathered in for museums of the Present. And each separate soul is strangely subject to the same sad law. Imperceptibly the glory of summer slips into the autumn chill and sorrow. Just now the flowers were bright, the sunshine brilliant, the voices of children heard across the meadows. Just now the lanes were white with may, and the singing birds were "fluting it" in every coppice, on every breezy morning, and the hedges were rich in flowers—the primrose, the violet, the honeysuckle, the wild rose—and the breath, first of spring and then of summer, was on the breeze—and now!

The grey day hardly struggles into morning. It seems to pause at parting from the more fitting glooms

of night. The mist is on the meadows, the chill in the wind. The leaves are slowly falling, one after one, and each that still clings to the branches, clings as a dying man, in face of his beloved, to the last remnant of life. The river looks dank and cold; the sky a leaden grey. If the robin sings he sings, sadly though bravely, of the coming winter. The ivy is greener than before, and the yew-trees too, but only to assert more stubbornly their funeral tales. Change upon change! All is change! The sadness and pity of it is,—nothing seems able to stand fast and endure.

So it is with this sad world; so with human things. Now, in human life itself—in the active effort of willing, enduring, working; amidst the changes and changes of mood and mind, of feeling and resolve—what is it which gives a sense of permanence and power? The answer is a single and definite aim. For a single aim lies still and steadfast beneath the passing clouds and sweeping shadows of ordinary change. And further, it implies concentrated efforts. A soul which acts at random and under the pressure of passing impulse can never do great work. It is driven and tossed by every passing breeze, by every vigorous current. It is the calm, determined, concentrated effort which tells. The gentlest men are also often the most powerful and prevailing, because of the steady pressure of their purpose, and the concentration of their efforts. If genius be “the art of taking pains;” steady purpose and concentrated effort are the secrets of success. This is true in the spiritual, as in other forms of life. And we may be very sure, dear friends, that in the perfect life of which our blessed Lord speaks, one chief element is the possession of a real aim, a well ascertained object,—to please God; and

in this are implied, a concentrated effort, and steady purpose of the soul to attain to that end.

IV.

For, indeed, many and very serious people are injured, unquestionably by the want of one clear aim. There is a narrowing chilling influence about what may be called negative effort. Before now, dear friends, you must have known characters who strive to avoid doing wrong, in strong contrast to those striving to do right. It is always a very weary effort, merely to endeavour to conquer a fault. I do not mean that it is not necessary and a duty, but it is often better done, where there is an earnest and steady effort to acquire a virtue. All Christian moralists have remarked upon the great difference between the old and the new law; between the ten commandments and the sermon on the mount. It is the difference between a skeleton, and a living throbbing being; between cold rules, and a living and life-giving person; between a clear but hard law-giver, and a trusting and helpful friend; between the chill and raw blast of a gloomy November, and the genial air of a tender day in June.

Think how harsh is the "Thou shalt not" compared with the winning accents, "Blessed are ye." How much more moving to be reminded, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," than the stern warning of the seventh commandment. It is stimulating to the soul to fling itself forward into some effort of duty; there is nothing stimulating in merely avoiding what is wrong.

It is thus, that a definite and ruling aim placed before us becomes so valuable. It is comprehensive as well as

stimulating; it ennobles, for it lifts the character above mere trying details. To try to please God will, indeed, insure an avoidance of evil; but, above all, it will allure to positive effort towards One who is worthy.

And for the Christian it is at once more possible to know what it is that God loves, and to have before him an example of how it may be done. Jesus Christ, our Master, has showed us God's will and way in His own person and His own life. He has set us also an example of a life-course wholly directed by devotion to the will of God. In that noble and unselfish example we see how wholly a life may be exalted by the highest of aims, and how readily all the details of common duty lend themselves as a part of the fulfillment of the will of the Most Holy.

V.

There are, dear friends, truths revealed in Scripture, and witnessed to by the Church which lead on, and help to this aim of the Perfect Life.

1. There is much so perplexing in the world; much that is so very sad that we are apt to forget the individualizing character of God's love to each soul. It has been truly said, "What God has done for all, He has done for each single soul." . . . By that continual operation of which our Lord speaketh, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work;" and Zachariah, "Who formeth the spirit of man within him," He, at thy conception, chose thy individual soul, and created it for Himself. Thenceforth, all His doings are individual to thee, the single special acts and tokens and instruments of His love.

"This is what the human heart so craves for; an individual love, a love which it shall have all its own. This is what God gives us."

For, indeed, this He offers to each one of us. It is true that, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and by union with Christ, there is the unity of the Church which is Christ's Body. It is, however, also true that one by one in Holy Baptism we have been made members of Christ; one by one we have *that* special bond with God through Christ; one by one we have received the further grace of confirmation; one by one, in the loving mystery of the most Holy Sacrament, we "eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood," we are "made one with Him, and He with us." One by one we belong to Christ, and in Him have the love of the Holy Trinity.

"God," it has been well said, "loves with the whole power of His infinite love, all who do not finally shut out His love; yea, He loves thee with His whole being, for God is Love. Each one is as much the object of that infinite mind and counsel, as if it was the solitary production of His omniscience."

Men speak at times as though the value of things were measured by their material size. David was impressed by man's nothingness as compared with the starry heavens, and seemed to forget that the man who could *think* of the heavens, and wonder at their immensity and beauty, was far greater than they.

To God, the living God, little could it matter as to the destruction of a universe, or the crash of worlds compared with the loss of one soul made in His own image, and redeemed by His Son?

If in any measure we can grasp some thought of this

love of God for each of us, it is this which stimulates as it arouses our real aim in life—to please God. This, indeed, means sincere conversion; that is, the turning of the heart in reality and completeness to God and higher things. It is possible; for we have seen it in God's servants, to live "*in the world as not of the world*;" possible to be earnest without being narrow, sorrowful without being gloomy, bright without frivolity, diligent without selfish absorption. Possible to bear good fortune meekly, and suffer ill with constancy, and, through evil or through good to uphold truth always, for the secret is—a heart turned to goodness, a will set on following a higher will—the secret is a faithful effort, comprehending all other efforts—to please God.

VI.

Nor is this all. To have this as a final aim is to make for that, without which we know, on the highest authority, there cannot be the fulness of the vision of blessedness.

After all, as regards ourselves, and our own condition, the primary use of life and trial is the formation of character. There are many things which may or may not belong to us in this world—genius, position, wealth, opportunity, mental endowment, happiness from circumstances and the love of friends, sorrow from the absence of all that helps us on—none of these can we carry with us beyond the grave.

One thing we *can* carry; one thing we *must*—the *character* formed in us during our short and chequered mortal life.

The form of character, as we know, which will bear the test of Eternity, is the character of those who have learnt, here at least, the rudiments of holiness. For holiness is, at least in one sense and degree, inward freedom from outward things. And therefore, the glory given to God in heart and life is holiness.

And how, I ask you, is character formed? The little acts of day by day form habits. The final fixity of habits forms character. We have little power over our character, but we have much power over our habits, because we have absolute power over our acts. Now, acts—the acts of life—depend for their texture and meaning on the *real* aim of the soul. Let the soul *love God*, let God be its aim, its object, its habits become sincere, real, thorough, Christian, and—stand where it may—its character becomes, by necessary process, a character of stalwart goodness; in other words, make your aim to please God, and the result is holiness “without which no man can see the Lord.”

Brethren, if there be any truth in this; if, indeed, we look forward with something like practical seriousness to the certain and tremendous future; surely, surely we can see what an enormous, what a momentous influence on the one thing worth considering, that is, on *character*, is exerted by a quiet faithful effort to please God.

But here, even now, even in this passing life, how all things are exalted by such a principle. There is, for instance, such a thing as natural joy. Men have a positive joy in the intellect by the contemplation of intellectual truth; they have joy in the moral departments of being, when willingly and lovingly brought

into touch with moral goodness ; they have joy in their affections when brought heart to heart with true heartedness and beauty of being. And to be *en rapport* with the most glorious and the best, what joy is there !

All forms of fascination worthy of an undying soul, meet in God. To name Him is to name the dearest, truest, most holy. He it is who has given us all that we love, all that we value, all that we enjoy. As the sun seems to kiss the waves of the vast ocean moving in rhythmic sway and swell under the summer breeze ; as it seems to dance joyously from wave to wave ; as it seems to sleep in calm content on the wide stretch of the far extending moorland ; so the soul seems to rejoice and delight itself and rest close to the beauty and tenderness of God.

Ah, would that we had the joy and brightness of the great Apostles ! An unflagging flow of gladness *there*, notwithstanding the trials, many, severe, and sharp ! Why should we not have it ? Why, amidst our abounding trials and perplexities should there not be sunlight in our passing lives ? The only answer is, if we want this joy, this unfailing sunlight, we must have their simplicity of purpose and steadiness of aim ; we must embrace all our labours, all our efforts in one supreme effort which can comprehend and ennoble them all ; we must make *the* aim of our "work and labour under the sun" to please God.

Well, then, let us remember the possibility, because the clear call to the perfect life. Let us settle it in our minds that first in that is needed, and to us all, by grace, is possible, is a single aim. An aim, too, be it remembered, suitable to all circumstances, at home with

all callings; an aim which is the true acknowledgment of the dignity of our being; an aim which alone is consistent with the supremacy of Goodness, and the unrivalled dignity of Religion—a simple, honest effort, wherever we are placed, to please God.

SERMON III.

The Duty of the Soul to the Kingdom of Christ.

"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."—1 Cor. xiv. 12.

WE have felt that all are called to the Perfect Life. To answer to that call is above all to have single aim—to please God. It is well to define "excel" exactly (is it not?), to see what that aim implies; and this leads us to remember the practical teaching of the apostle, "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."

I.

I would remind you, then, brethren, that to lead the Perfect Life implies also that the soul has some sense of its duty to advance the Kingdom of Christ.

St. Paul is here laying down certain principles to guide those who were in perplexity at Corinth. He has written those words, which form an epoch in human thought, on Divine charity—the ruling power of love to God, and in that, love to man—written, in fact, fully and in detail of the aim and object of the perfect life. Explanations, however, are needed on many points. There were special and mysterious gifts of the spirit at

the time. What was their value? How were they to be used? The apostle gives several and important directions; one of these is before us as a further principle, "seek to excel to the edifying"—that is, of course, to the building up—"of the Church."

It can, of course, never be forgotten that each soul stands alone, and face to face with God. It is wonderful to think of, but it is true, that as each leaf on every tree is said to have some speciality of form, so each soul—although possessing certain resemblances to all other souls—is individual and different.

This is true, and it is a solemn truth; it reminds us of our individual responsibility; it reminds us that, as the apostle says, in a very true sense, "every man must bear his own burden." No thoughtful person can doubt this truth. If there be one fact brought home to each of us by the very constitution of our nature, and the circumstances of life, it is the awful grandeur, the awful loneliness of the soul.

"Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone—so heaven has willed—we die?
Not even the dearest heart and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh."

This is true. Still, let us remember it is but one side of a great truth, and there is another.

II.

And that other is—we are members of a body. To be entirely alone is impossible. In nature, with all her individuality, there is an unslackened bond. "The unity of nature" is a favourite theme with great masters of the physical sciences; and the further

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discovery and observation go, the more it is felt that every movement of nature is interlinked with every other.

The God of nature is the God of grace, and—as all who have studied Bishop Butler have learnt—there is a strict analogy between His workings in either sphere of His mysterious and astonishing activity.

But besides this, dear friends, all through the working of social matters, men cannot but feel that as selfishness is the worst of things—the very seat and centre and spring of sin—so a deep sense of corporate life is a strong check to selfishness. Few things are more beautiful in English life, and, indeed, in—above all—the life of the Teutonic nations, than the reverence for the family. It is the home of the deepest affections, and the sweetest and noblest virtues. It results from a sacred *relation* into which man and woman enter. It is a school of goodness, of gentleness, of considerateness, of manliness or womanliness, of courage. When it is shaken, then follow innumerable evils and misfortunes; when it is in its full and healthy vigour, there follow innumerable blessings. Half the struggles of philanthropists might cease; half the efforts of the law might be unneeded if the family were in full vigour. Nothing can take its place. It is God's own fundamental ordinance, and the faint shadow and image of what His Church is meant to be. Even in the mysterious and supernatural conditions under which our Lord condescended to enter this world, He maintained the idea of the family. In our times, men—who, one would have hoped, might have thought otherwise—have joined in shaking the foundations of the family, by encouraging, doubtless all unintentionally, or from high motives; but, none the less, disastrously,—the infamy of divorce,

which is in direst contradiction to the Law of Christ. That must, of course, be withstood by all serious Christian people, not only for the evil results to society, but also because it goes at the root of a Divine institution which is intended to train us in a large unselfishness.

And truly, though in a lesser degree, the same lesson of corporate unselfishness, is taught us by the idea of country. There is such a virtue as patriotism. We live in an age of invertebrate weakness, and perverted morality. What has been known as "the Nonconformist Conscience"—with which, let it be plainly said, religious Nonconformists have nothing to do—is a handy expression for the most vulgar and revolting form of hypocrisy. So in general matters, small knots of men, driven on by the exigencies of "party," or by self-seeking, have in word—if they cannot be in deed—been steady traitors to their country. Whatever their country did, in carrying out the grave responsibilities laid upon her by God, they have made it their business to find fault with. Sometimes they are dreaming publicists and pamphleteers posing as statesmen ; sometimes they are simply unprincipled worldlings, playing with audacity and cleverness for their own hand ; but their great effort is to traduce and injure their country, and not to build up, but to pull down her great work throughout the world.

Corresponding to these are the so-called "liberal churchmen," whose chief delight seems to be found in abusing their Church. They are ready to throw themselves on the side of professing Christians, who object above all things to the children of England being brought up in the Christian religion. To oppose religious teaching, to dissent from the Church or to abuse her, is at

once to win their suffrages. They *have* their reward. The following, for a time, of all who are opposed to the Catholic Faith, and then the contempt of all good men who have no admiration for treachery, even when concealed under a specious appearance of "liberality."

And so in human life. There is a temptation to that form of self-seeking and selfishness, which makes religion *merely* a personal matter, and tends to make us all forget the constant claims upon us of the kingdom of Christ.

III.

There may, of course, dear friends, be, both in the family and in the patriotic efforts of a country, some corporate selfishness. There may be sometimes a certain narrowness in our action, both in the home and with our fellow-countrymen; but Cosmopolitanism is often, also, a form of wrongheadedness and cynicism, or even an excuse for shirking immediate responsibilities.

There is, by the Providence of God, an opportunity in home life, and the lives of us who belong to a great empire—an opportunity, quite invaluable, for generosity of effort towards others. To think of others with care and tenderness; to "esteem others better than ourselves;" to bear others' burdens, while willing manfully to bear our own—how entirely that is in consonance with the spirit of Christ! How very unlike the usual course pursued by us all! Yet it is just to have *this*, that we are placed by God in domestic and social relations, and, in these, are trained, or meant to be trained, for a wise fulfillment of the wider citizenship of the children of God.

IV.

And what is that? It is the full realization, needed in the Perfect Life, of the claim and call of the kingdom of Christ.

The Bible is full of teachings as to the kingdom of God. Let us clear our ideas. What does it mean?

We are too apt to imagine that this is a phrase and nothing more. We treat it as a vague and misty thing, without definite outline or shape clearly defined. This is not so. Nothing is more fatal in religion than empty phrase, and half the ills for souls and for Christendom have come from fixed formulæ and unmeaning phrases. The kingdom of Christ came into the world of experience and reality, and affected all things. It has been a power. Like the power of wind and wave; like the power of electricity and of mechanical invention, it has had to match itself against other subtle forces in our human world.

We all have an idea of empires and kingdoms. They have their organizations, their modes of government, their objects of working. So with the kingdom of Christ, only that *it* is supernatural and far reaching, touching human life indeed, but far transcending it. Still whatever it is, there it is. It has made, and it makes a vast difference to the world, whether it believe it or whether it deny. It is possible to fallen man to forget it, to ignore it, to deny it. Well, that makes no difference. There it is, the kingdom of Christ. Our believing or disbelieving, our contempt or forgetfulness, do not alter the motions of the travelling stars, or the regulated circle of the winds; no, nor the existence and dignity of the kingdom of Christ.

For after all, although there is plenty of philosophy in Christianity, Christianity is not merely philosophy. Although it is closely connected with history, it is not mere history; although it is a great witness to truth—truth quite apart from what we may choose to think about it—yet it is more than philosophy, or history, or even truth; if it is anything, it possesses life. Life is the ultimate thing, life is the great thing; without life we are nothing. There is implied in the teaching of the Bible, about the kingdom of Christ, a distinct bond between the soul and God, that is in other words, a Religion; there is implied a supernatural power, a supernatural assistance on the one side, and real loyalty and real faithful service on the other; there is implied the existence of a great system and a real system, which holds and stimulates, which conquers and controls the will and character of man. This mysterious power, this awful force, this real system of supernatural things is acting upon us, whether we like it or whether we deny it; not as a dream, or a poem, or a theory, any more than the foundation forces of our natural life are such—and, like them, it is as practical as it is real—this is what is called in the Bible the kingdom of God.

Now, all serious persons who think at all are bound to realize, as a first duty, loyalty to that kingdom. It is well (is it not, dear friends?) that St. Paul should assert, as in the text, the necessity for all of us of trying to build up this kingdom. I am not wrong, therefore, in asserting that, to do that, in whatever measure, however small, is one of the leading principles of the Perfect Life. St. Paul says that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Our blessed Lord says, "the kingdom of God is within you;" and He says,

"it cometh not with observation." That is to say, in other words, that this mysterious power approaches man just as art, or literature, or political ambition, or scientific enthusiasm approach him, only in a deeper and stronger degree; that is, it approaches his very self. The extraordinary sense of fitness to his needs, which the announcement of the kingdom of God first brought home to him; the thrill and interior enthusiasm which the announcement of Christ's revelation first awakened in him, are awakened still. His poor heart wavers and doubts, suspects and sorrows; but in the long run, and in its worst moments, it is beating true to another world, and a mysterious power steps out of the dark to meet it, and soothes its throbbings, and satisfies its yearnings, and leaves, leagues behind it, all rivals in such an enterprise, and asserts its sway in that invisible world in which we really are living—and that power is the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of Christ is in direct opposition to "the kingdom of this world." The wild fury of unregulated desire is opposed to it, and *it* fights with them. Even when *they*, in practice, are victorious, strangely enough there remains a witness in the conscience and mind of man that he belongs to the higher kingdom.

Everything in human life has taken a new meaning, a new interpretation from this kingdom. Art and literature, even politics—with all its chicanery and pretence; human emotions, human affections, human thoughts—all have been modified or changed or sanctified by the strange power which has thus touched the world.

Nay, more, it has been truly said it has affected even language; and not only the language of the cultivated and the thoughtful, but the language of the poor, the

uncultured, the suffering. It is truly said that *that* language makes the highest the noblest things—the things beyond sense and time, “the common food of daily life.” We do not realize—we are so used to it all—that “penitence,” “contrition,” “humility,” “the love of God,” “salvation,” are terms of which man in his noblest moments, never dreamed before; that these are terms and phrases, expressing deep and supernatural facts, imported into this life by that mysterious force and system, “the kingdom of Christ.”

Moral supremacy, after all, is the real supremacy. The interest of history is its *moral* interest. The one struggle worth thinking of is that unending struggle—the struggle between Good and Evil. Say what men will of the various religions, or so-called religions, which have offered themselves for the suffrages of men, *none* has really taken this fact as a fundamental postulate except the religion of Christ. Human nature is ever, dear friends, with all abatements, always the same.

What do you need? I do not mean in your light and careless moments, or when the pressure of the world is upon you; but what do you need in those more serious moments when, through some disaster, some sorrow, some sickness, some awakening, you are *yourself*? You need some power to meet the pressing sense of evil; something to stand against its awfulness and its mystery, its intensity and its tortuousness and its depth. You need some force to support you, first by light, then by assistance, both to see and to follow the incomparable beauty of goodness. You need more. You need some system, some certain and unimpeachable force and revelation of truth, to meet the yearning of your poor human heart for an abiding and trustworthy love.

Where do you find it? What Religion attempts to offer you anything like it—anything that may even distantly touch it? None, I answer with confidence; none but Christianity; none, no, none but the kingdom of God.

V.

It must never be forgotten that, long before the mere direct expression of these things, this kingdom was ruling in some sense in the souls of men. As I have said already, dear friends, our neglect or our denial do not alter facts. Whether we like it or whether we leave it, there has been and there is the greatest force for moral and spiritual purpose, always at work, but more fully manifested and quickened into fresh activity by Jesus Christ—and that force is the kingdom of God.

That mysterious system, that wonderful combination of forces we are obliged to meet, if we think at all, as friend or foe. The man who treats the Christian Religion as a neutral thing, as a thing of indifference, is—forgive me—a dreaming fool.

You do not treat a conflagration, or a storm, or a frightful illness in your family, or a great domestic happiness, or a political revolution as a matter of indifference. If the Christian Religion is true, you are bound to treat it with the gravest respect, and to exert yourself to act accordingly. If you decide that it is *not* true, or at any rate act with the easy-going indifference of those who so decide, remember that you have taken upon yourself to pass final sentence upon what is quite evidently the greatest moral, the greatest spiritual power in the world. You have done more. You have

passed capital sentence upon the highest and most cultivated human intelligence; nay, upon the capacities of your race for moral advance. My brethren, if you have done so—but I am sure that you have not done so—you are wrong; and if you are not wrong, you ask further what is the practical application to human life of this world-wide, of this supernatural, of this mysterious force,—the kingdom of God. The answer is, dear friends, the Catholic Church.

And now we are out on the open sea, and now our sails are unfurled and our canvas is set, and we understand distinctly where we are going. Or better, to change the metaphor, we place our feet on solid ground; we deal no more, for the moment, with the mysterious and the supernatural, we are serious students in the school of history.

The Catholic Church is a fact. You may dislike a fact, but if you take any interest in it you must account for it. No reasonable account can be given, I submit, for the existence and work of the Catholic Church, except the account of the Gospels and the Creeds. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;" that is the overwhelming truth which has revolutionized later times, and which ought—yes, above all things it ought—to govern the thoughts and the lives of us all. Jesus Christ is Eternal God. He is also our elder brother; He is the head of our humanity; He is the glory of our race; we are proud of Him, we are thankful for Him, if we know what we are about—as a father is proud of a son that is worthy of him—He is one of ourselves, by the mysterious power of His Godhead He and He alone is able to draw us into the Divine life. I challenge you, my brothers, how dare

you, how can you, be other than full of pride—of the right sort—may I not say of love, for Jesus Christ?

It is a distinct historical fact that Jesus Christ founded a society. Judging by the ordinary canons of evidence, that society was organized according to His mind and will. No one who studies history and the New Testament can doubt that in that society there were, and are, as we believe, according to the mind of the Founder, three orders of ministers. The *names* of those orders varied, of course; the orders themselves, never. There were also broad rules of communication between this world and another, such as regulated prayer and the Holy Sacraments. The wonder and wisdom of the sacraments being this, that in all the seven sacraments—the two greater and the five lesser—there has ever been an outward sign, corresponding to man's material nature, and an inward grace corresponding to His spiritual self. There have also been the solid and accurate statements of the faith known as the creeds. The Catholic Church, then, is the society founded by Jesus Christ. It is more than a mere *natural* society; it is the expression in this world of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is one with it, and to be a real and living member of the Catholic Church is to be what St. Paul calls "in Christ." It is true that in God's family, owing to the sinfulness of man, there has been a serious family quarrel. It is sad to think how the Anglican, the Roman, the Eastern parts of the Catholic Church have disagreed. "An enemy hath done this." It is delightful to think how, underneath these external quarrels, there is a real unity among those who are baptized by the same spirit, and who feed on the same Body and Blood. It is sad to think how our Dissenting brethren,

who have been baptized—and *therefore* baptized into the Catholic Church—should worship in a manner not according to her ways ; should, therefore, lose the grace of confirmation, the blessings of an apostolic ministry, and the Real Presence of Christ in the most holy sacrament. It is happy to think that where baptized Christians have thus been externally separated from their true Mother, through no fault of their own, they have at least the grace of regeneration, and every blessing that their Father can and will give to true hearts. Anyhow—for that is what we are concerned with now—we have before us as the executive of the kingdom of Christ—the Catholic Church.

VI.

For ourselves, we are placed in that part of the Catholic Church to which it has pleased God to give mission and jurisdiction to the English people. We cannot but be thankful for any proofs of goodness in the lives of those who have not the full privileges which we enjoy. We may learn shame and sorrow when we see how others use their fewer gifts in a better way. Still, for what we have, we must be—we ought to be—grateful to God. Around us are the Romans who, unhappily, cling to what appears to us unhistorical as to the constitution and the government of the Church. Around us are the other Dissenting bodies, with much that is good about them, and much that is to be deplored. What is our duty? Recognize goodness, wherever it is found, as the work of God, but cling to what God has revealed. Be faithful Catholics. Do not be taken in by the foolish modern fallacy—the

fallacy of a lazy reason, of worldliness in religion, of real indifferentism—which says, “What does it matter, Catholic or Protestant, Dissenter or Churchman, so long as people are good?” Remember this is a fallacy. It is true that “they who are not against us are on our part.” Remember *also* that “they who are not with us are against us.” Remember, in fact, charity, but also decision. The curse of the Anglican part of the Catholic Church has been often over-cautiousness in her ecclesiastical rulers; and consequently there have been many among the laity brought up in indifferentism (miscalled “charity”), who have small idea of the claims and seriousness of the Catholic Faith. We must be loyal to our Church; loyal to the Unseen. We must have effort, and love, and common sense, *i.e.* δύναμις, and ἀγάπη, and σωφρονισμός: but we must fear and flee δέιλια—the spirit of fear of incurring responsibility; the spirit which says a soft “Amen” to every heresy; the spirit that is terrified at the idea of making a distinct utterance as to truth (when truth is not popular); the spirit that has weakened and all but wrecked the Anglican Church in an invertebrate age, which has so often conquered and corrupted not only many priests, into whose lives worldliness has crept, but even injured the episcopal bench.

We are bound, dear friends, to be faithful to the kingdom of God, to its executive in this world—the Catholic Church; and above all, as practical Christians, to the Anglican communion—with all her faults, and also all her blessings, in which it has pleased God to place us.

VII

"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church." What, then, dear friends, are we to do?

Well (1), we must learn a loyal love to our own part of the Catholic Church. She has her trials—all parts of the Catholic Church have had. She has had, and has disloyal servants, sometimes among the highest order of the ministry, sometimes among her priests. We must not judge them. They answer to God; but we must remember that they and we are *servants* of the Church of God. No heresy, no unfaithfulness in a priest or bishop can justify us in doing other than being faithful to the Church, and withstanding unfaithfulness, with love indeed, but with determination.

(2) Be faithful to the Catholic Church. The holy traditions, the pious customs, the wise thoughts which have been handed down are yours. Do not fall into the illogical temper, the unspiritual temper, of a foolish and narrow Protestantism. What is Catholic is yours. You owe allegiance to the Anglican Church, *because* she is that part of the Catholic society founded by Jesus Christ, to which our Lord has given mission and jurisdiction to ourselves. You owe no allegiance to Protestant heresy, which has so often darkened and deformed the Church of Christ.

(3) Be loyal to the Kingdom of God—faithful to the spirit of truth and righteousness; never forgetting that the Church is here to help us to form a character for eternity, to learn the science of goodness—the greatest of all.

Learn to wait and watch. Grasp *this* principle of

the perfect life—the readiness to wait and watch; the love of goodness wherever it may be found; the faithfulness to revealed truth; the loving spirit combined with unflinching principle; the hatred of all sham, of all that is merely showy or pretentious, or pompous, or full of display; and the love of goodness and truth and reality,—the attitude, in fact, of a soul fearlessly and faithfully “waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ”—of a soul which, with love and courage, is striving to advance the kingdom of Christ, and so is living according to an important principle of the Perfect Life.

SERMON IV.

“*Semper agens, semper quietus.*”

“Quit you like men, be strong.”—1 COR. xvi. 18.

“The things which ye have learned . . . do; and the God of peace shall keep your hearts.”—PHIL. iv. 9.

THE Perfect Life, according to our Lord’s teaching and example, is the life of one who does his best, and acts according to the fullest powers of his regenerate nature.

“To him who seeks the light, the breaking dawn
Shall break anew;
And he who does his best leaves nought undone
That man can do.”

The Perfect Life, therefore, implies certain clear principles. First, it implies a real and definite aim—to please God. And then it implies the large and generous effort to advance the kingdom of goodness, the kingdom of Christ.

I.

We go deeper, now, into the interior mysteries of the soul. For, indeed, dear friends, it is, all through, with the soul that we are dealing. I call your attention, therefore, to another mark of the Perfect Life; it is the life of one “*semper agens, semper quietus*,” always in

activity, yet always in interior calm. This, surely, is one of the most characteristic marks of a good man. Let us develop this assertion.

Of the value of activity there can be no doubt. Where would the great achievements of our day be without a constant activity? Why are the Teutonic races so well in the forefront of civilization but, speaking broadly, from their activity? When the great irruption of our barbarian ancestors took place which startled imperial Rome out of its sense of dignified security—what was it, among other characteristics, which struck the mind of the thoughtful Roman historian, and accounted in some measure for their triumph, their easy triumph over the disciplined legions of Rome? Rome did not think of it as we do, nor was it then what it is now. Christianity, of course, touched them and regenerated them; still it touched a *stock* with special power and striking characteristics. Among these characteristics—besides respect for woman, and love for home; besides hatred and contempt for untruth and sham, either in word or deed—was a real sense of manliness, of the dignity of labour, of the duty and blessing of hard work.

For, indeed, if there be one duty for man, it is the duty of strength; and there can be no real strength, none of that spring and fibre which helps to conquer temptations to laziness, and effeminacy, so powerful as the habit of work. Man is born to labour. If a man does not work, he is not a *man*. If the soul, the self, have the right instincts of manliness, it will find expression in the hard world of fact. It implies something of that self-denial and self-control without which a manly life cannot be. This is a general law of our being; this is

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a law obedience to which makes half the nobility and half the usefulness of man. St. Paul is only falling in with the higher instincts and the true feelings of those who realize their greatness and their responsibility, when he says, "Quit you like men, be strong."

II.

But the same is brought home to us Christians, as an essential principle of the Perfect Life, by that which, above all, should guide us—by the example of Christ.

We know that Christ is God "blessed for evermore." Just *because* we know this, it is of the gravest importance that we should remember His entire humanity. He appeals to His disciples to remember this. He keeps the fact steadily before us in the mystery of the Holy Sacrament. There is no shuffling out of the miracle of the Resurrection, as unbelievers have tried to do, except by denying the strongest lines of evidence ever afforded for any fact in this world. There is no getting over the plain teaching of Scripture and the long tradition of the Church as to the Blessed Sacrament, as some have tried to do, in an unhappy spirit of unbelief. No; there is no escaping from these central truths, except by denying the evidence of Scripture and the early Church. Well, if these are granted, then Christ is true Man, and He makes an appeal to us all, which St. Paul re-echoes: "Quit you like men, be strong."

Our blessed Lord had this characteristic mark. He presents before us in perfection the sweet and tender virtues which are the glory of woman; He equally presents the strong and powerful virtues which dignify

man. He is the Representative Man; He is Human Nature by representation. The moment we realize, even in a distant degree, what He was and what He did, we find that He, and He alone, rose to our truest standard of the manly life.

We mean, when we talk of manliness, unless we are sentimentalizing, and "giving ourselves away" to *cant*—"the *prima materia* of the devil,"—we mean the due proportion and use of the noblest forms of strength which characterize our humanity. These show themselves in different ways at different times: they come out, so to speak, they act under varying conditions, but there they are. We may have a vague sense, but we have *au fond* a true sense of what we mean. Everywhere, and under all sorts of varying conditions, on the whole we know what we mean by a manly character.

Again, this character *does* attract. When, in the vulgar unrealities of controversy, men tried to discredit those who were faithful to the Prayer-book and true to the Catholic Faith, the "moderate" and cautious half-believer, the worldly and disloyal, the bitter and unscrupulous could find no readier weapon wherewith to assail loyal Catholics than to call them "Ritualists," "namby-pamby" weaklings, who loved "man millinery,"—and other forms of falsehood;—all which reminds us what a glorious thing real manliness is, and how much men feel that, if they desire to discredit those from whom they differ, the readiest weapon for the purpose is the accusation of want of manliness.

In the particular instance I have alluded to, the statements of assailants, of course, were soon discredited, because they were false; and good men and true by-and-by discovered that none were so really manly as

those who did not trifle with words, or play fast and loose with their obligations,—as those who hold the Catholic Faith.

Well, in the Incarnation—that is, the teaching of the Catholic Church—God and man were united in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, then, the Head of our humanity, was indeed perfect God; He was also perfect Man. God made man, made him for Himself. It was therefore needful, if man was to be restored to the state from which he had fallen, that God should enter into and develop his humanity. So it was. By the Incarnation, once—only once, but certainly once—we see a perfect Man.

And what do we find in Him? Well, dear friends, we have at once to acknowledge that the standard of manliness which He presents to us is very different from what we have sometimes been betrayed into believing to be the fitting standard. To be proud, to be "knock-him-down," to be resentful, to be hectoring, to be self-indulgent in wild and ungodly words, in self-pleasing habits, in customary insincerities, in brute selfishness—this we have too often learnt to consider "manly." What it *really* means is weakness and selfishness, submission to impulse rather than to principle. Any person, however foolish, can follow a crowd to do evil. Any person, however foolish, can allow his impulses to carry him along. Any person, however foolish, can be boastful, can make an appearance, can succumb to the voice of the majority. It requires a *man* to stand his ground.

You turn to Christ. What do you find? Many things you admire, that you know to belong to your better selves; many things that you have not attempted,

that you do not understand. You *can* imagine Christ under altered conditions, and in a different age from that in which He lived on earth; you *can* imagine Christ giving His countenance to many manly exercises quite unlike the conditions of His life among men. You cannot imagine Him other than condemning false manliness in every form, other than severely reprehending many things which yet some men would persuade you to think "manly."

Our Master is as we are. He is true Man. He shows us how truly we *may* be like Him, if we will; He arouses us to remember, also, how unlike Him we often are; for manliness—as Christ shows it—is tenderness and strength.

We have, indeed, a lower self and a higher self. The higher self recognizes and realizes the magnificence of self-sacrifice, and the greatness of self-control. The lower self cannot forget the almost instinctive revelations of our greater manhood; but it is, by them, puzzled and distressed. The revelation of a noble manhood in Christ comes to it slowly; it recognizes, it resists. The work of the Holy Spirit—if we lay our hearts open to Him; the work of Christ, if we will think of Him, love Him, follow Him by the grace of God, is to show us, is to lead us into—gradually, it may be—the highest manliness, that we may obey the Apostolic injunction, the exhortation of the Perfect Life, "Quit you like men, be strong."

III.

And so it is that Christianity teaches us the need and duty of manly effort. Indeed, in this it only echoes the law of God which we observe in natural life.

According to that law the world has been constantly advancing, not only by God's providential power and guidance, but also by man's effort. Unless the "*semper agens*" is true of each of us we are not fulfilling the law of our being. It is strange, it is sometimes even pathetic, to notice how things—like the sad story of the great novelist—are "moving on." Yet so it is: continual change, which may be, which ought to be, advancement, is the law under which we live. We are not merely standing and watching the changes which take place. We are sometimes tempted to imagine that the great river of life is flowing on, and we are merely spectators of the current, standing on the banks and watching it as it goes gliding by: but such is not the case—we ourselves are moving with the current. And it is more even than that: we are taking our part in the movement; we are each lending a hand, for better, for worse. And the duty insisted upon by the Apostle is this, that we shall do so in a sensible and manly way. "Quit you like men," he says, "be strong." It is not only, then, a part of the direct teaching and example of Christ, but it is also brought home to us by the philosophy of a true experience, that strength and courage, diligence and self-discipline are duties—and not very easy duties either—which should be recognized, learnt, practised, by a sincere Christian. He should be "*semper agens*." "Ever the worst turns the best, to the brave."

IV.

But although, dear friends, it is, as I said, true that such, on the whole, is the teaching of reasonable experience, especially in a strong race like our own,—yet is it not true that the standard of Christian effort and

Christian manliness is somehow or other very often divergent from that of the world? We belong to a fallen race, and unconsciously we accept lower ideals than those placed before us by Christ. I suppose all would acknowledge that in numbers of little details of life it would be absurd and impossible to follow *exactly* the example of our Lord. He lived in a totally different state of civilization from that in which we live. He belonged to a different nation, and grew up amidst customs entirely unlike our own. Still, one thing we do know, and that is what makes Christ's example applicable to us all: He governed His human life by *principles* which are of value under all circumstances, and for all times. His life was one of supernatural elevation of thought—"in the world, not of the world,"—of entire truth, and of abundant love.

Our lower standards of manliness and effort sometimes give the lie to these things. Christ's sincere servant, boy or man, desires to please Him, and gets into the habit of saying to himself, "What, in this, should I have been glad to have done, when I come to die? What should I have been glad to have done, when I come to the Day of Judgment? What may I feel fairly sure Christ would have done Himself under similar circumstances? Then that is what I mean, by God's grace, to do." The result, dear friends, you may be very sure will be a life of manly effort, of manly activity, in the highest sense. You will be learning, almost unconsciously, that tenderness and strength which are the striking marks of Christ's active life on earth; you will be "*semper agens*" in a truly Christian sense; you will be doing what the Apostle urges upon you—"Quit you like men, be strong."

V.

And yet Christian activity is never fussy. If there is to be the "semper agens," there must also be a "semper quietus." It is a remarkable thing, when you come to think of it, how the Christian Religion constantly insists on diligence, activity, effort, manliness; and yet how it as constantly insists on the blessing and necessity of peace. The reason is that no activity is worth the name, in the view of Christianity, unless it is based upon, and supported by, powerful interior principles. Men may do things from mere impulse, or from natural, almost physical, tendencies. But *Christian activity* is the outcome of the inner life. Now, when is our inner life disturbed or paralyzed? Only when we are not resting upon, not in constant communion with—God. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." And St. Paul speaks of the Christian's possession being, what he calls, "peace in believing."

For interior peace is indeed a necessity of the inner life. How can life be the Perfect Life unless the actual springs of being are in constant and quiet union with Him from Whom all perfection comes? It is striking to notice how, in a life like our Lord's, in which there was such unflagging activity, and indeed such oppressive conflict, He is never tired of inviting to, and promising peace.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you:" here is His promise on the very eve of the conflict of the Crucifixion. "Peace be unto you:" here is His greeting after the Easter victory. We know,

dear friends, that this is His gift—that we may refuse it or make it ours. There can be no perfect life without strong faith. Belief, not doubt, is the basis for any action worthy of a manly character. Belief is, as you know, not by any means the mere acquiescence in the soundness of an argument. To *believe* is a great deal more than to *conclude*. You may carry an argument on from point to point, and arrive at a sound conclusion which commends itself to your argumentative faculties and your better judgment, and yet you may be far enough from faith. For it, you need not only proper evidence and an exhibition of facts which can be trusted, but you also need the action of the will. The will must exert itself to arouse our own very selves to make a real fact of our being, what we have seen as a conclusion of our argument. We all know, from right reason, that we shall die; but it requires a distinct effort of the will to rouse our very selves into something like a full acquiescence in that great fact.

Now, faith is a moral act; it requires the exercise of the Reason and the effort of the Will. Our Blessed Lord, by the triumphant miracle of the Resurrection, has left to right reason a sufficient evidence of the truth of His claims. By the exhibition of His lofty character, and by the power of His Holy Spirit, He has 'stirred up our wills to embrace what our Reason has concluded. Hence it is that we have the peace of conviction in a life so full, and so rightly full, of energetic effort; nay, in a time of such feverish and unresting excitement, of constant argument, of perpetual discussion, or audacious doubt, it is something—I ought to say it is everything—for the Christian to fall back upon the solid certainties of the Catholic Faith,

upon those strong and supporting convictions which soothe and support and calm the mind—as part of the Peace of Christ.

VI.

And still more for a healthy soul and a right activity is needed the peace of the conscience, the state described in our prayer as "serving God with a quiet mind." Our Lord calls us all to this. It is the gift of His atoning mystery, the "washing our souls in His precious blood," the bringing us to peace with God. It is one of the most blessed works, one of the most tender activities of the Church our Mother, the inviting us to confession and absolution, so that the peace of conscience may be maintained, or, if disturbed, may be re-made.

We must jealously guard, dear friends, this great possession. What is the whole world to us and all its gifts and all its attractions compared with undisturbed communion between our souls and the Father of us all? This peace is the gift of Christ. Do not let "the sin which doth so easily beset you" rob you of such a treasure; that it may be so, you need indeed to use prayer and sacraments and all the appliances placed at your disposal by the Holy Church, but more than all, you need a watchful and an honest will, active and alert for all that is right and true.

VII.

And then there is, beyond all things, the peace of the heart.

The most real and the deepest happiness of life is to

be found in the play of our affections. It is when we love truly that we are above all happy. To exercise itself in real love, the heart of man claims an adequate object. All those dear objects of our affections which God has given us, and which make up the interior beauty and brightness of our English homes—our parents, our children, our sweethearts, our friends—what are they but the gifts and the reflections of a perfect love? If we are thoughtful, if we are prayerful, if we are grateful, we learn through these to love God; and we learn and know through Jesus Christ that God loves us—"Loved me, and gave Himself for me."

VIII.

Here, then, dear friends, is another important principle of the Perfect Life. *Semper agens, semper quietus.* It is full of the activities required by Him who Himself "worketh hitherto." It is learning and using that interior peace—of conviction, of conscience, of heart—which is among His best gifts; and from this there grows more and more that strength and calmness so remarkable in the Christian character.

Sometimes the world seems to us almost like a dream; certainly we know that the fashion of it is passing away. Yet we ourselves, in the inmost seat of our being, remain. We have an element of eternity about us which defies the destructive power of change. If by grace we are faithful to those principles of the Perfect Life, which we are allowed, which we are taught to act upon, to exercise ourselves in, we shall not only be living a life of usefulness and activity in this world, a life which cannot fail to leave for others

its mark behind it, a life which must contribute something to the progress and the truth of things, a life which will assist towards that greatest consummation—the final triumph of righteousness; but more—we shall be steadily preparing ourselves for that final and blessed home of love and goodness “where beyond these voices there is peace.”

SERMON V.

Innocence and Penitence.

“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned.”—**ST. LUKE** xv. 17, 18.

ALL souls who, by grace, are seeking to lead the Perfect Life, are, in spiritual condition, in one of two classes. Of these, the first consists of those who have preserved their baptismal robe unstained, who have, that is, “kept innocency, and done the thing that is right.”

It is not meant, of course, that there are any souls without any taint of sin. All have got the fatal marks of a fallen race; but there are those “who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;” who have been kept “from the great offence;” who, indeed, had repentance for minor faults, and whose salvation depends, as that of all, upon the atoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice; but still—like St. John—have been steadily looking heavenward, and have been ever advancing nearer and nearer to God.

I

My brethren, for the preserving of innocence, as, indeed, for keeping the soul when repentance has

remade it in the lost likeness of God, one real and important rule is the steady avoidance of unnecessary knowledge of evil.

In the story of the Fall, we learn how our first parents went wrong through the indulgence of an unwise curiosity. I take for granted that, however the actual facts be interpreted, you are not troubled by scientific assertions which would upset the Word of God, and that you do believe that you have sprung from a single pair—whatever God's mode of creation of these may mean. Whatever, then, may be meant by the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," this much we are sure of—*their* temptation came from the indulgence of undue curiosity, contrary to the command which they had received.

That temptation comes with sad recurrence to the human race. The desire for knowledge is, in many respects, a right desire; but in our race there is a fatal wound in the understanding, in the affections, in the will, so that this desire is itself perverted, and we all know too well with what dangerous results. The desire for a knowledge of evil is strong in the corrupt human heart. It is a part of that miserable pride which is the root sin of us all. Since the Fall, man has steadily listened to the tempter's teaching, "Ye shall be as God to know good and evil."

It has been well said that this is the difference, that whilst God "knows, He does not experience sin," while man plunges into sin in order to know it. Surely it is too true that in the young there awakens the evil curiosity to find out sin. There are things in the world which may be known, but which it is better for us not to know. Doubtless there are abysses of evil which men

are tempted to explore—to look down into—which is to be lost. The morbid fancy of our own times excites the mind to all sorts of dealings with an unseen world which are wrong. The mind, indeed, condemns them when they are discovered to be fraudulent, to be untrue; but they are to be condemned when they *are* true. There is knowledge which we have no right to have, and which, if we have it, ought not to be propagated. There is a knowledge that is forbidden. And they are blessed who shun unnecessary knowledge of sin. They are they who “keep innocency,” and stand in the first ranks of the blessed.

II.

For do not say that *they* have not been tempted. Do not fall in with the devil's suggestion that they are more or less interesting weaklings; that their state of innocence is far behind the real experience of bolder sinners. If you say so, if you think so, you are wrong, seriously wrong. These are they who *have* had a struggle and have not given in. These are the noble souls who have listened to the whisperings of grace, and risen and followed. Such you must have come across in life, noble and beautiful. Their desire for knowledge of evil has been as keen as yours, but they have resolutely turned away. Their passions have been as fierce as yours, but they have resolutely subjected them to the imperial sway of an unfettered will, supported in its rectitude by the grace of God.

Alas! we know well enough what temptations there are to the young not to appear behind their fellows in knowledge of evil. We know how “seeing life,” which

is often spoken of as a proof of manliness and independence, is merely a *façon de parler* for plunging into mortal sin. We know how literature itself has become more and more debased, even when it covers its evil with a thin veil. We know how the more advanced and more popular prophets of "realism" think that it is good for "society" to study, under the name of "literature," mere photographs of filth. We know how, even beyond this, there is a vast propaganda of iniquity, worked by the Evil One, who has his agents busy with sleepless diligence, to pollute and destroy human souls.

Under these powers the weak and the wayward fall. The strong are they who scout the enticements of evil curiosity. They are "innocent from the great offence." Blessed, blessed are they! The strong, the fearless! For them is the sweetest music of a heavenly country; for them all natural beauty, all scenes of sweetness—the flush of day dawn, the song of birds, the dancing sunshine on the restless sea, the deepening crimson of the sunset sky, the whisper of the winds in pine trees, the murmur of the babbling brooks—all, all have double loveliness, a fairness and a freshness which "has vanished from the earth," for those who have fallen victims to the fascinations of deliberate sin.

III.

For the fact is, innocence is that noble state of spiritual being in which a life is lived from earliest days, by a high standard and a fixed principle.

Principles are everything. Walk over the wild mountains, and here and there, revealed above the mist, or in a break of the clouds, is seen a guiding peak.

The sea goes rolling on in its immensity, but the faithful teaching of the compass, or the serious remonstrances of the soundings, warn the seaman of the danger of hidden reefs, or perilous currents, or shallow channels. These are like principles. They do not change. Other things around them change, but not they. It is a religious principle that Jesus Christ is God; that the Holy Catholic Church is the witness to His Will; that the Bible is the inspired Word; that sacraments are the closest and most blessed points of approach between the Seen and the Unseen; that prayer is a power of unapproachable and unfailing efficacy.

It is a moral principle that we are bound to be honest; that we must avoid hatred and malice; that we must shrink from all that is impure; that as our neighbour's goods and character are to be respected, so also we must respect our own sacred and useful power of transmitting life—these, and others, are moral principles. They stand and warn, they stimulate and guide, through all the changes of manners and customs, of fashions and opinions.

Dear friends, the mark of those strong souls who have “kept innocency” is that from the first they have been sensitively alive to the force of *principle*, and above all, of the principle of avoiding, of shrinking from, needless knowledge of what is bad. Surely in the Perfect Life there are those who, by steady faithfulness to light from the first, are the truest and strongest of souls. They are not always those whom the world most admires. It may be they are retiring and hidden; but, if so, it is in the Divine Presence. Theirs is the calmness and dignity of holy souls in the midst of the self-assertion, vulgarity, and clatter of the world, even of what is called “the

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religious world." Deep sense of duty, ever deepening; lofty ideals, ever extending; sweet thoughts of glorious things, ever enlarging; loving sense of the needs of others, and of the beauty of God, ever growing more acute—these are theirs. We look out upon a world in ruins. In our own day the sadness and degradation of Religion is brought home to us more and more, chiefly by the vulgarity, shallowness, insolence, compromise of what is called—in strange irony—the "Religious Press." Many things, within and without, make the heart sad, but like the breaking of clouds and the brilliance of the moonlight on a night of storm; like the blaze of the sunlight at noonday, when the fog in the morning has been dominating the heaving sea—so, in the midst of disappointments and sorrows, comes before us some simple, great strong life of an innocent soul, following "the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

IV.

The beautiful vision of holy souls preserved in their baptismal innocence, reminds us, dear friends, of two things. (1) How carefully and lovingly we should guard the young, shielding them from the knowledge of evil, and (when it becomes inevitable that they should be aware of much that is wrong in the world, and dangerous in their own fallen nature) taking care that they should learn the mysteries of life wisely and cautiously from those who love them, and who are able to guard them against the danger of revelations of the darker or more mysterious side of life becoming temptations instead of warnings and teachings. The greatest change in the world, it has been said, except indeed the change of

death, is the change from boyhood to manhood. It is the duty of those who guide the young to direct that change so that, in it, innocence may be not lost but strengthened, that the change itself may be not corruption but progress. And then (2) how faithfully should we all avoid unnecessary knowledge of evil. In a time, for instance, like our own, in which literature of all kinds literally pours from the press, how careful should we be in our choice of reading for ourselves, as well as for the young! There are bright and beautiful things even in this sad world, and we should do our best that our own minds and the minds of others should not *dwell* upon the evil and dark things. Oh, ye who have been preserved "from the great offence," pray for grace, and exert a loyal and loving will to "keep innocency, and do the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

V.

But for most of us, if, indeed, we are seeking to obey our Master as to "the Perfect Life," we can only do so as penitents.

If much of our Lord's teaching is, as it is, certainly severe; towards true penitents, He is always tender. In the whole reach of the New Testament there is probably nothing more tender, nothing that has moved the heart of man more deeply, than the parable of the Prodigal Son. And it is so unspeakably valuable, because it gives us so perfect a picture of the decline and fall of a soul, and of its complete recovery.

We see here a picture of that fatal desire to be independent of God, which is the root of sin. To take

one's own way, to act as one who is master of all things, who knows as well as God, is the sad ambition of fallen man. Indeed, dear friends, there never was an age in which this ambition was more patent than in our own. "What is the trouble of the time?" we ask; and the answer is, "To get on without any reference to God." He has given us so many gifts; He has allowed us to make so many discoveries, and to be rich in so many inventions; He has provided us with such skill in mechanical, in literary, in commercial achievement, that we have learnt to think, or try to persuade ourselves, that we can do very well without Him—the Giver of all.

As in this age, so in human life! Young, strong, vigorous, full of life, lured along by the fascination of a future of imagined brightness, and by the mere "joy of living," we are apt to walk forth in life with an insufficient sense of our need of relying upon Him who "giveth all."

Then comes the attraction of temptation, and then all the fascinations of things seen. We know that all God's gifts, all the "creatures" with which He has enriched our lives were meant to be, and might be, means to lead us nearer to Himself; but, alas! for fallen man, he fixes his mind upon the things of sense and time, and in them forgets the Giver.

God, dear friends, has given us time, talents, influence, strength of body or mind, warm affections, protecting friends, opportunities for forming our characters, and for doing good to others—and we are led to think that these are *ours*, and we like to use them and enjoy them as we please, only not under the restraint of the law of God.

The devil persuades us that *that* law is a tyranny;

that we may, if we will, be free, be independent. Free and independent, in a complete sense, man never can be. He is *a creature*, and his greatness and happiness depends upon his recognizing *facts*, recognizing his true position. His true position is, he cannot stand alone. If he is not ruled by God's law, and so living in the exercise of the truest freedom, then he will be ruled by his undisciplined desires, and corrupt ambitions, and become a slave. The younger son, in the Parable—alas! like so many of us—was wild and wilful, left his father's house, determined to be free from his father, and desired to act independently of him, taking his loving gifts as his rightful possessions, and going his own way. We know what came of it—what always must come of it—he had to have something to rest upon; in his ingratitude and self-assertion, he had thrown his father aside, and he was left to himself and the world.

We know, dear friends, what followed; we know what always does follow—the waste of God's gifts. It is useless, it is madness to try to be happy away from God. When that is attempted the result is *waste*. We waste God's good gifts. We squander them on things that are passing, and which never can *satisfy* the human heart. Indeed, it has been truly said, we waste the great endowment of free will, which is *the* feature of our being most like to God; we enslave the will by submission to passion, and worldliness, to evil habit and to sin, until at last men begin to deny that they ever had a free will at all. He “wasted his goods.” It is the exact picture of a soul that has forsaken God.

And yet even though a soul forsakes God, it does not follow that God forsakes the soul. He never does so until it be *impossible* for Him to do anything more

for it. Even if He ceases to remonstrate, He does not cease to watch and wait. No opportunity will be lost by our Heavenly Father for trying to draw His son to Himself; no vexing delay or irritating refusals will destroy His long patience when He longs for a soul. St. Augustine says, "I, poor wretch, foamed like a troubled sea, following the rushing of my own tide, forsaking Thee, and exceeding all my limits: yet I escaped not Thy scourges. For what mortal can? For Thou wert ever with me, mercifully rigorous, and besprinkling with bitter alloy. But where to find such, I could not discover, save in Thee, O Lord, Who teachest by sorrow, and woundest us to heal, and slayest us, lest we die from Thee."

Still, again and again, though there are remonstrances of conscience, and though God is felt to be warning and calling, a soul will often plunge deeper and deeper in sin. Even when it "begins to be in want," it will try to find rest and satisfaction in some further sin. In vain! Then there may be ruin and despair, *or* there may be, thank God! the effort to the Perfect Life—the awakening to penitence.

VI.

The two steps of penitence are marked in the parable. Our Lord touches on a deep truth in saying, "When he came to himself!"

To be proud, to be sinning, dear friends, is to have parted company with our true selves. We know, as we say, how men fall "below themselves," or how they "rise superior to themselves." We remember that mysterious faculty by which we can survey and study ourselves, and take an estimate of the real value, not

only of our actions, but of our inmost motives and the true springs of our life. There is within us all a true self which has upon it some shadow of the image, though the blurred image, of the God from whom we come and to whom we go. Men do not naturally love sin. The soul that sins is making a vast mistake. It is choosing and resting upon something short of the only object worthy of its efforts. It is like a traveller in a fog, confused and bewildered and losing his way. It is like a seaman who desires a port of safety, but has flung away his compass, and, for clouds, cannot see the stars. It is like one in delirium, the victim of the wild vagaries of a disordered brain. The first steps to better things, is to have the sight clear, and the brain calm, and a reasonable idea of how things actually are; and so, the first impulse to penitence is "coming to one's self," awakening to the real state, the real needs, the real demands of one's inner life; the sitting up, like a startled sleeper, and gazing, wide-eyed, at things as they are. This is not all, indeed; but it is much. It is not all; for the heart's affections, the clear sight of the soul, the vigour of the will are not yet enlisted fully on the side of Right. It is much; for, so far forth it gives the lie to the deepest danger.

It has been truly said that a main characteristic of the Christian religion is "confession of sin, and prayer for mercy;" that while the forgiveness of their sins is one chief theme of the praise of God by the saints in eternity, so on earth the thought of these sins is the ground of constant humiliation. To the earthly soul, things are very different. To it, shame and sorrow seem to have no place in the heart of an ordinary and decently religious man. He learns to be fairly

contented with himself without fear, and sorrow, and contrition. He is willing enough to fulfil a certain narrow range of duties far below God's law. He is enough for himself; he is self-sufficient; he is contented with himself; he is self-satisfied. He thinks much of his merits; he is willing to make a general acknowledgment of sinfulness. He is chary enough of confessing actual sins. He has a low standard; it is the standard of the respectable world, not the standard of God. He is shocked at flagrant acts of iniquity, which are disapproved of by society, and measured, in their seriousness, not by the diseased motive which underlies them, but by their effect in the estimate of the world—in other words, he is a pharisee.

Plenty of so-called religion is like this. The superficial, self-satisfied man of the world *chooses* which form of heresy is most likely to suit his natural proclivities. He never thinks of *obedience* to the voice of the Church of God; and so, the understanding being darkened, there grows in him a stunted, unreal religion, which passes muster very well in the world, but is utterly valueless to God.

Of this the penitent, even in the opening stages of his penitence, is incapable. A flash of light has showed him much. Voices from a higher world have at last startled him. He has "come to himself"

This is, indeed, the first stage of the penitent life. Oh that we would turn upon ourselves, and see ourselves *as we are*! The day will come when it *must* be so. If now, now "while it is called to-day," we have the courage to face things in the clear, cold light of truth, it may be painful, but it will be blessed. "We come to ourselves."

VII.

But that is by no means the whole of penitence as a true state of soul helping on to the Perfect Life. In the prodigal there was an earnest trust in his father. All things had proved valueless and useless without *him*. He was thought of then as the true force and helper of life; more—as one who had been forsaken, treated badly, forgotten, ignored, betrayed. Sorrow came over his soul, as he thought what his father had been to him, and how he had behaved to his father.

And how wonderful, how touching is the father's conduct to the failing son. When the son does return to him, he more than "meets him half way." There is no word of reproach; there is sympathy and tenderness and yearning love. The son, indeed, offers no excuse, makes no tortuous explanations. He has wakened up not only to himself, but also to his father's goodness, and his own ingratitude. He loves his father. He is ashamed and sorry, but full of humble trust; and the father has no harsh word, no reminder of the folly and evil of the past. He is more than glad to welcome the wanderer; he runs to meet him when he sees him a long way off, and his heart bounds towards him. "How," he seems to say, "can I be angry, can I find fault? He *was* dead, he is alive again; he *was* lost, and is found."

Had not our Lord Himself told us this, we, dear friends, dare not have ventured to imagine that so it could be; that God our Father, the All Holy, the Ever Blessed, *could* so have welcomed a penitent sinner. Yet so it is!

So it is for us all, if, having sinned, we are by grace penitent.

Sin, then, persistent, unrepented sin, is a state of death. We move in the world often—it is terrible to think of—among living corpses—dead souls, unrepentant sinners.

God's grace, however, is powerful for recovered life. That grace will not be wanting to us, if we seek it. We may have gone far wrong. We may be what is called "dead in trespasses and sins;" and yet, if we "come to ourselves," and "arise and go to our Father," there is the tender welcome of a loving heart, there is the real readiness to receive and save the lost.

Oh that our penitence may be real, searching, severe! Oh that we may have that grace in our souls which gives us genuine sorrow for sin committed, arising from true love and trust towards God!

The marks of true repentance are these—

1. There is humility. Those who have sinned and are sincerely sorry, can never think highly of themselves. They cannot be hard upon others, for they know what they have been themselves. They have touched *reality*. They have seen themselves *as they are*, in the light of God's goodness and holiness. Pride is gone.

2. There is decision and activity. Having wakened to facts; being alive to their own ingratitude to Him to whom they owe so much, they learn to act accordingly without delay, and with genuine effort. They are learning to *love* God. They never can forget how they have sinned against His goodness, and so, with decision and vigour, they set themselves now to do His will.

3. There is a calm joy. Like the breaking of the morning after a night of distressing storm; like the first sweet breath of flowers, and the tenderness of the breeze in the opening year, after the fierceness and chill of winter is gone, so is the sense of our Father's smile after, having shut ourselves out from His presence, we return to find his loving welcome. For penitence is not merely sorrow for having done wrong, but *such* sorrow as springs from love of God, such sorrow as enables the penitent to feel, know, and confess his sin; but more than that—that would be still insufficient—such sorrow as enables him to *give up* what is wrong; literally and truly to *break with* the past; such sorrow as is therefore a power for nobility of character, a real force in the Perfect Life.

SERMON VI.

The Hidden Life.

"Your life is hid with Christ, in God."—COL. iii. 3.

THERE was doctrinal error at Colosse as well as slavery to evil or injurious practice. Strange notions of a graduated series of mediators had taken possession of the Colossian mind. Excessive rigour of practice had gone hand in hand with this. The consequence was the true spirit of the Christian life was suffering, was melting away. St. Paul would have none of this. He urged upon them the consideration of their true place. By Holy Baptism they had, he reminds them, been buried out of sight of "the world." They had risen again, but they had risen to God and unseen things. "The world" could not enter into their new life, and *they* were not to allow the principles of "the world" to absorb them. If Christians, if following the example of their Master, their true life was a hidden life, a life "hidden with Christ in God."

St. Paul, in these words, revealed, indeed, a moral and dogmatic fact; but he also revealed a habitual condition of will, of being, which he himself had tested, if any man, by experience. There had been moments in his life of apparent triumph; there had been times of apparent failure. He had not been, as we know,

without his dark moments and his sad hours, as other men, nor had he failed to feel delight, and joy, and a rapturous enthusiasm. He of all men had a wide fellow-feeling with "all sorts and conditions of men," but also, of all men, he had his life a "hidden life."

I.

Among many signs of its divinity, dear friends, is the *interior* character of Christianity. We are told that the Kingdom of God—that imperial force on which Holy Scripture dwells so much—is "within" us; that it "cometh not with observation;" that it has to do in its real sway with the inner springs of will and character. Its very spread was compared to the secret working of "leaven," as it "leavens the whole lump," that the Divine forces which brought it about "came down like rain upon a fleece of wool," or "like dew upon the tender grass." Whatever outward expression it has, and must have, in dealing with those whose life must be externally expressed, and who live in a world of outward things, still its real deep and abiding character is interior. It is to be expected, then, that, according to its teaching, the Perfect Life must have upon it that mark of Divine origin and guidance which can only be described as "hiddenness."

II.

Man is a composite being. The body itself is a mystery, as is the inner principle or self. And in a being, by the very constitution of his nature, so mysterious, it is certain that there must be much

concealed behind the veil. We know, indeed, how much of secret evil there is in this very awful world. We know that the world in which we are is very full of awfulness, not only in what it reveals, but also in what it conceals. "The hidden things of darkness" are, Holy Scripture tells us, among the subjects of revelation of the last great day. There are also things "hidden by the light." There are depths of self-denial, profound abysses of goodness, secret and concealed acts of strength, energies of noble purpose which can never be seen or known this side the grave. Our own reasonings and Holy Scripture itself teach us that there are unseen glories of another world. Some part of the education of character is, nay, the greater part is, in what does not meet eye or ear. As the myriads of stars—nay, the depth of the blue heaven itself—are concealed by the blaze of the sunny day, so the deepest and brightest things of life are, in fact, "hidden" things. It is a strange thought to think of the multitudinous unseen beauties of the world itself. How many glorious valleys lie glittering with sun-illumined spangles of ice which never meet the eye of man! What unnumbered flowers are—

"Born to blush unseen,
And waste their sweetness on the desert air!"

These indeed are not "wasted." They may be joys to angels. They form part of God's Eucharist, as He "delights in His works." Still, in the sense of being before the eyes of men, they are among the "hidden" things of the world. The hidden beauty of the natural world is perplexing, yet true. To-day the fog lies thick and cold along the ground, like a sad white winding-sheet. The trees stand stiff and leafless in the winter

gloom. The very waters run with a sense of shiver, and the wind, too weak to drive the mist away, moans low and sadly in the pines with a wail like the distant sobbing sea. And yet, and yet, there are spaces of gorgeous azure above these clouds, and streams of sunlight somewhere in the world, and happy winds that sigh to happy hearts! Strange, mixed, sad world! We still have to be strong and content to wait and know hereafter. Still for us all there are the hidden things of time.

III.

And then there is, we know, the hiddenness of the soul. In one sense the soul of each lives in loneliness. It cannot be otherwise. It is true that few things are so needful for human happiness and human well-being as sympathy. Different as we are in a thousand ways, one of our chief duties is to recognize our kinship in the great human family, and, above all, in the family of Christ. We are bound to remember the Fatherhood of God, for then we cannot forget the brotherhood of man. If the serious sense of this is in our minds, we have wide thoughts for all mankind, and specially for those "of the household of the faith." Ranks and circumstances, and varying gifts of mind or heart, may make us very different in a thousand ways; yet our hearts will be ready to go out to one another, and, by God's grace, that ready sympathy, which is *the* solace of life, will bind soul to soul.

More still is this natural and necessary for those who, by natural ties, are bound together and *owe* one another love. The great duties of *kindness* on which the

Apostle insists—kind thoughts, kind words, kind deeds—are the natural outcome, enhanced by Divine Grace, of a sense of being *kin*. By sympathy and kindness, dear friends, are the best of God's messages carried to human hearts. For sympathy and kindness in the apostolic sense, in the sense in which they were seen in the life and preached from the lips of St. Paul, are no mere states of easy good nature, and easy-going sentimentalism. They are strong outcomes of hearts alive to the facts of life, the needs of souls, the relationship of man to God and so of man to man. By these and by all the gradations of love which God has given to His creatures, the loneliness of life is made less saddening; and yet, when all is said and done, is it not true

“Not even the dearest heart and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh”?

We know, indeed, that in the crises of life we are alone. We are alone in temptation, alone in our deepest sin, in those springs of motive which colour and even constitute sin—alone in our profoundest sorrows, anxieties, disappointments, joys. When we think of it, it supplies one motive more for tenderness and long-suffering towards each other, for considerateness, for sympathy. for supporting strength arising out of the pathetic sense of the mysterious loneliness of every single soul. And this, of course, comes home to us more, or may come home, when we dwell upon and realize Pascal's solemn saying, “*Je mourrai seul*”—“I shall be alone when I die.”

And necessarily from this loneliness of the soul there must be “a hidden life.” Each brain and heart—however open to, however closely knit together with, another—

must have myriads of thoughts and feelings indescribable. Like shadowy armies marching through a mountain pass, seen only in shadowy outline, are the trooping thoughts which traverse the regions of the brain. And like the flitting figures in the mist, seen by the great Poet of the other world, are the fleeting fancies and the wavering, changing feelings which people or make their pilgrim passage of the heart. In some natures from a natural reserve, in some from habits of concentrated thought, in some from the results of a life of uncongenial surroundings, this may be more clearly marked, but everywhere—in the most frank, most sympathetic, most unself-concentrated, it is *there*. It cannot be otherwise. In *some* sense we must lead a “hidden life.”

IV.

But, of course, dear friends, “hiddenness,” as St. Paul speaks of it, is far more than this.

“Hiddenness,” we know, is a characteristic of God. “Verily Thou art a God that *hidest* Thyself, O Thou Holy One of Israel.” In God we live and move and have our being. He is not “far from any one of us.” “His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, His footsteps are not known.” The Bible is full of this mark of God’s life. Questions indeed have been raised as to the existence of God; but these are rather academic than practical. Probably no soul ever really has doubted as to the Being of beings from whom we come, to whom we go. Questions as to God indeed are, as it has been truly said, not questions for scholar, divine, politician, but for man as man. They touch all things.

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They are answered by the whole man. Decisions of the creature as to the Creator involve deep moral decision. They are made by heart and conscience as well as, even more than by, brain. The very existence of God may be said to be an intuitive conviction. It is only "the *fool* who has said in his heart, there is no God." "This world of ours will become so refined," says the philosopher Luthenberg, "that it will be as ridiculous to believe in God as it now is to believe in ghosts. And then the world will become still more refined; then we shall believe only in ghosts. We shall ourselves become as God." It is a deft way of reminding us of the certainty of the existence of, and of our intuitive conviction of—God. And yet—certain as we are of this, and clearly as His voice whispers in our inner souls—"hiddenness" is a characteristic of His being—we cannot see God.

V.

The same was a mark—if the paradox may be pardoned—of the manifestation of Christ. We might imagine that if the all Holy came into His own world to be one of ourselves, that He would come with some of the pomp which we should conceive to be befitting to His glory. Not so. God loves his fallen creatures. That indeed it has been felt is not so great a marvel, but the marvel is the degree to which He loved them, the marvel is that He came to be one of themselves in order to save them. We, who are so ignorant of the mysteries of life and the ways and works of God, cannot say whether they could not have been saved in any other way, but we know that in *this* way He came to save us; and then

coming Himself—the Everlasting Son—what do we know of His characteristic mode of action? We know that it was a sacred “hiddenness.” He was hidden, we may say with reverence, in the bosom of the Father. He was hidden in the womb of Mary. He was hidden in the circumstances of His birth. He was hidden in His Nazarene home. His work, which has been in this poor world so marvellous and so far reaching, was done in a short time, and with only such *public* effort as implied shame and struggle and pain. The rest was hidden.

VI.

It cannot, then, dear friends, be a matter of surprise that the Apostle should call attention to, should insist upon, this hiddenness as a mark of the Christian. For hiddenness, in this sense, is a feature in the Perfect Life. It is natural to fallen nature to desire to be “to the front.” Some gentle souls, indeed, withdraw themselves almost instinctively; but then they are subjects of the grace of Christ. Some, from fear or pride, hold back; but this is only a display of one of the many treacheries of a corrupt will. In one way or another; in some cases with, apparently, unconquerable self-assertion, the corrupt human heart “seeks for the pre-eminence.” We are all, by the terms of the corruption of our nature, like Diotrefes. Some in subtle and self-deceiving ways, others with consuming self-pleasing and ambition, have a desire to be first, or forward, a desire to be spoken well of, made much of, to be the recipients of honour, of praise.

What is required of us? That which is nothing

less than a great moral effort, an effort of will and determination supported by the grace of God—the moral effort of hiddenness. To stand to the front when *called* to the front is a duty; but it is also a duty and a virtue to work in quiet ways, to act as only under God's eye, and for the praise of God, to be ready to "take the lowest room," to be ready, not to rule but to serve, not to acquire in order to possess, but in order to minister, to do "what the hand finds to do" with energy, diligence; efforts which are required of man, but, in doing, to seek only such measure of success as may please, only such reward as may come from—God.

This moral effort, dear friends, is a duty; but it is also a possibility, for it is made in accordance with our true position. What is that?

Well (1) we have Christ's unfailing sympathy. "As He is, so are we in this world," is the Apostolic description of the position of a servant of Christ. And that our Lord knows, recognizes, intends. We are well aware, from the records of His earthly life, how deep and searching was His sympathy with all true and innocent forms of human joy and human sorrow; how He took pains to make people glad; how He felt *with* them in sorrow. If He is hidden, our life is hidden *with* Him; for He carries for us, in His loving heart, an exhaustless store of sympathy.

And (2) by the terms of our regeneration we *are* "hidden with Christ in God." This dogmatic fact is what St. Paul, indeed, is urging here upon the Colossians. We cannot gauge the closeness of our mysterious union with God in Christ. *With* Christ we are "buried" by baptism; *with* Christ we have risen to the possibility of a new life. From our baptism we are temples of the

Holy Ghost, who dwells in us and makes us one with Christ. Being one with Christ we are "partakers of the Divine nature," and brought into fellowship with God the Father. We may, then, put forth the power that is in us, act upon the power and the teachings bestowed upon us, rise up to our true position. We may make that moral effort by the help of God's grace, which it is our duty to make, the moral effort of "hiddenness" of mind and temper, of will and desire in the fire of the Divine light.

VII.

Brethren, that is what we are bound to do. More and more to cultivate that lofty spirit, and loyal sense of the unseen; more and more to leave the "shadows of religion," and live in the realities, so that our "hiddenness" with Christ in God be a deliberately accepted position as well as a Divine possibility.

This indeed itself leads to nobler motives, more perfect consolations, deeper thoughts. It enlarges the horizon, for the practice of "the hidden life" leads the soul to look out more and more into the unseen. Things of this world lose their undue hold upon the soul, and all things are touched with a touch of eternity. A brighter light from another land illumines and glorifies the common acts of every day. If there is a certain sadness in the passing away of things seen; if the falling leaf and fading flower of autumn speak with a sense of sorrow to the human heart; yet this is changed into the calm of resignation or the brightness of joy by the lights and teachings which come to a life "hidden with Christ in God."

VIII.

But further, this is a part of the Perfect Life, because from it comes the fundamental virtue of spiritual strength.

Humility is the grace secured by the hidden life. It is, in fact, another word for *reality*. It is the counterblast of a soul living in the powers of its regeneration to that pride which, more than all things, separates man from God. Humility gives strength to a character because it is reality. It is the practical and habitual recognition of fact. In ourselves we *are* nothing. Our strength of hand, of brain, of effort; our vigour of purpose, our warmth of affection; the gifts of quiet fancy, or tender sympathy, or keen insight; the gifts we hold as citizens of this world, of place, or name, or fame—whence came they? Do we say that all proceeded from our diligence, our unflagging effort, our self-control? That all are a proof of our own energy, and inventiveness, and use of opportunity? Yes, but this energy and force, this power of doing and acting, again, whence came they? From God, brethren; from Him alone who giveth all, from Him to whom we owe all we have and are, except indeed the sin that has marred it all. To realize and act upon this, with earnest diligence and entire dependence upon Him—that is, to be humble, that is to live in and exercise the grace of the hidden life. Let us pray and strive that we may lay deep this foundation of spiritual strength. Holy teachers remind us that to acquire this grace we must take pains, we must be in earnest. We must try to know ourselves, to see ourselves as we are

in God's sight, not as we may fancy ourselves to be in the light of our own self-deceit. We must remind ourselves of our own weakness and capacity for failure. We must avoid seeking praise, or throwing out nets to catch the applause of others. We must avoid speaking of ourselves, and especially of any good in us. We must not allow roundabout ways of acquiring praise from others. We must mistrust ourselves while having entire confidence in God. If praised and justly praised by others, we must think of *their* charity in giving the praise, and God's goodness and power in giving us grace to deserve it. In our own souls, let us offer it all to God. We must be patient under humiliations and mortifications. Unless we endure to be humbled, we can never be truly humble. We must take all things, by whatever means they come, as from God. We must fear to make excuses, unless truth and duty compel us to excuse ourselves. We often detect, through others, the real faults in ourselves, and to know them is of real and lasting value to us. We must beware of pretending to know what we do not know, of acting a part, or of concealing from others our ignorance. We must willingly accept the second place rather than seek the first, and willingly do humble, unostentatious, hidden work.

It is a great grace, and it is given in answer to prayer and to sincere effort, and it brings strength and peace. The law of Christ in the matter is clear, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." If we follow Him, we must try to lead the hidden life with Him; not seeking the honour that cometh from men, but the honour that cometh from God only.

For, brethren, there shall come the great unveiling.

Many a reversal of human judgment shall there be on that great day. Thousands of hidden souls who have humbly done their duty, with motives, intentions, efforts "hidden with Christ in God," shall there be acknowledged as God's true children. The last shall be first, and the first last ; and they who here have hidden themselves in His presence from the strife of tongues shall be seen in the clear light of that day of truth to be His "when He maketh up His jewels."

SERMON VII.

Life a Serious Matter.

“What is your life?”—JAMES iv. 14.

ONCE more, dear friends, by the providence of God, once again—as years go on, with an ever deepening sense of the seriousness, and an ever more severe sense of responsibility—we are standing face to face with the Passion of the Lord. Year after year—for many years almost without a break—year after year it has been the kindness of the dean and chapter of this Cathedral to give me the opportunity of speaking to those of you who have cared to listen, upon the great subject of this solemn time. And, again, we are challenged, each one of us—are we not?—as years go on, again we are challenged by the Church to try and fix our minds on the most mysterious, the most wonderful event of history. We are called this week to remember the principles, as we are called next week to remember the facts, of the Passion of Jesus Christ. No man can deny—no matter where he stands in relation to the Christian religion—no man can deny that the crucifixion of our Divine Master, and the consequences of that crucifixion—that these things are the turning-points of history. And so, year after year, we Christians try to think, try in the midst of an advanced, in the midst of a difficult

civilization, in moments when work is overwhelming us, when many duties are calling to us—try to answer the challenge of the Church, and to allow our minds to rest on the great fact of history, on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

If Jesus Christ were not God, then many of the events of modern history, many of the changes, much of the advance of civilization—like many of the virtues new to the world, like patience, like humility—most striking in the Christian character, like spiritual beauty—can hardly be accounted for. Napoleon the First was right in his remark to the Count Montholon; “Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself,” said he, “founded great empires; but upon what did the creation of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him.” And, again, the emperor is reported to have said, “If once the Divine character of Christ is admitted, Christian doctrine exhibits the precision and clearness of Algebra, so that we are struck with admiration at its scientific connection and unity . . . let it (*i.e.* the mystery of the nature of Christ) be rejected, and the whole world is an enigma; let it be accepted, and we possess a wonderful explanation of the history of man.”

Such was Napoleon’s just conclusion—we may go a step further.

If Jesus Christ be God, and since Jesus Christ is God, then the mysterious transaction of the Passion, then the fact that the living God has descended into the darkest corners of the arena of death surely will have consequences.

The Church, of course, is always reminding us that there are consequences in the death of our Master, such as repentance, such as restoration, such as forgiveness,

such as redemption; about that there can be no question. But, then, besides all that, there is a further thought. If Jesus Christ is God, and since Jesus Christ is God, then the Passion is not only the ground of a mysterious redemption, of a marvellous restoration, of tremendous powers placed at the disposal of a sinful world, but also it has another aspect. It throws light upon individual duty. It is upon that I shall try to fix your minds this week. We shall not venture to view the Passion in its high sense as the great sacrifice, we shall not venture to discuss it as the redemption of the world in the sense that the Church teaches of, as the mysterious power by which the debt has been paid for human sin; but I shall ask you to remember that the Passion teaches us a great deal about individual duty which is strictly practical, and which surely, I submit, touches us all.

For, indeed, I would have you remember now that in the Passion our Divine Master met in conflict the two great forces of the world. First, there was Life about which we know so much, and yet so little—life so bright, so far circling, so attractive, so moving, so wonderful, so mysterious, so overwhelming, so changeful—life which we know by experience up to a certain point, but which, none the less, is wrapped about in clouds of mystery. And then He met the other force—death! Death, which we know *not* by experience, death in which we are, however, deeply interested, because every one of us must come face to face with it, and understand, in the long run, what it means. Life with its bright garments, life with fascinating attractions; death “dark-stoled, dark-hooded, like a dream!” These two forces, we do well to remember, these two

forces tried conclusions in the person of Him who is everlasting life, and who submitted to a tragic end. Now, I submit, that when we are face to face with so solemn a drama, at least we ought to try to understand in some measure what it means. *Ecce Homo!* There He is, hanging upon the cross, hanging not only in those first hours on Calvary, but hanging, in another sense, before us hour by hour, week by week, century by century—the great interpretation of a tremendous conflict—a conflict between life and death.

And then remember that at that time—at the time of that last great struggle, death seemed to be triumphant. It seemed, in fact, that death had conquered goodness—that would have been, for the forces of darkness, a triumph indeed. It seemed that death had stabbed hope—that would have been a triumph for the devil. For a moment it seemed that the most glorious life, the most splendid example of exalted humanity, the most holy figure—call Him what you may—that has ever been placed in the picture-gallery of mankind, was struck down and destroyed by the forces of corruption. And yet we Christian believers know that that temporary, that apparent triumph of death was for death a great disaster. We believe that as a matter of fact; we believe, in fact, we see—even looking only at modern civilization, at modern literature, at the changes of the world, that without even being convinced, much less converted Christians, there is evidence that that apparent defeat was a magnificent victory. But we also know that in that victory, masked under the appearance of defeat, there was a great practical lesson for us in the contemplation of which we shall not waste our time. What is that lesson?

Well, things look very different, as you know, under different lights. Go up the Faulhorn in the darkening twilight, and you find it a vast assemblage of terrible peaks, made more terrible by the dark, and the roar of the water, and the groaning and hurtling of the wind. Stand on the crags when the dawn is breaking, and before you is a vast expanse of varied country, an almost magic map of enchanting landscape. Lie on shipboard in the bays of Crete, and at night you will find around you the mysterious crests of mountains—rising, under the starlight, stern and still; turn on the searchlight to landward, and then you can examine the granulate crests, and the crannies, and the clefts, the pine trees, the grasses, the ferns, and the stones. All things wear varying aspects according to the light under which you place them.

If we do not indeed venture into the deeper thoughts of the great mystery, still we may turn the light of the Passion upon human life, and learn accordingly.

What is your life?

The answer will come, and will rightly come, if we try our lives under the light of the Cross of Christ.

Certainly when we turn to life, it is most interesting, it is most mysterious, and, as St. James says, it is short. But St. James is careful to answer his question as to the character of life, by pointing out that it is like a vapour. Nevertheless, we do well not to forget that though a vapour disappears—seeing that no particle of matter is ever destroyed—it reappears in another form. Without the aid of the Passion of Jesus Christ, without the thought of the Crucifixion, we can indeed—oh, can we not?—agree that life is interesting, that it is

mysterious, and that it is short; but, with the aid of the Passion of Jesus, we may determine broadly two things of some importance.

First, under the light of the Passion, your life is most serious. It is serious to live. You have within you—we have within us—the possession of the living God. That we should hold the secret of our existence, that we should carry about with us tremendous forces with mysterious results which are not entirely outside our control! That we should have conscience which always speaks, that we should have distinct statements as to the meaning, and the dignity, and the awfulness of death; that we should be told that, here and now, we are on our probation, and that one day we shall be judged by One who went through the most disastrous sorrow, and the darkest death—that makes life serious. Remember then, to possess the gift of life is to be the owner of a serious possession.

Then, further, Life is not only a serious possession. That strange sweet thing that you and I are feeling vibrating in our nerves, thrilling through our brains, guiding our thoughts, inspiring our muscles—helping us sometimes, betraying us at others—to possess this is to be placed in a position of tremendous dignity. To belong to that family of whom the highest representative was the living God, who faced death and finally slew it; to belong to that family where the living God, in dealing with death, supplied to his followers, his brethren, mysterious powers for repentance, for restoration, for high thought, for better things—is a high dignity indeed. To belong to that family which is—in the last resort—higher than the angels, for “He took not the nature of angels, but He took the seed of Abraham”; to belong to that family

which has to travel through strange varieties of sorrow, through the grave to eternity, but which in all sorrow is always following the track of a crucified God; to belong to that family whatever your position here—the street boy, the clerk in the office, the young man of the study, the parson in the pulpit, the high-placed politician—whether in fact you are a great person or a small; to belong to that family which has been dignified by the Presence and the Passion of our Master, is to have a dignity, my brothers, of incalculable distinction; a dignity which we may not, which we must not, forget. What is your life, face to face with the Passion? It is a matter of the greatest seriousness; it is a possession of the highest dignity.

There have been men and women, there have been powerful writers in literature, there have been powerful players on the stage who, before now, have almost seemed intent on persuading us that suicide is beautiful; those who would persuade you that to “trifle with the power of the transmission of life, as in adultery, or such grievous sins, is a thing almost to be made poetical; that a young man can trifle with the sacredness of the body, may forget the dignity and sanctity of woman’s nature, and still be encouraged to think it “natural,” and therefore interesting, and even right. There are those who would persuade you that marriage is scarcely sacred, and that divorce would do as well; that you can play fast and loose with principles and come off scot-free. My brothers, put life in the light of the Passion, and at least, remember just this, just this—it is serious, it is dignified; and if so, act accordingly. Fight the fight, fight it out as becomes men whose life has this seriousness and dignity, and never think it mistaken to

struggle, and to hold your own against sin. Remember the words of a good and serious poet—

“Thronging through the cloud-rift, whose are these, the faces
Fain revealed yet sure divined, the famous ones of old?
‘What’ they smile—‘our names, our deeds, so soon erases
Time upon his tablet where life’s glory lies enrolled?

“‘Was it for mere fool’s play, make-believe and mumming,
So we battled it like men, not babe-like sulked or whined?
Each of us heard clang God’s “Come!” and each was coming:
Soldiers all to forward face, not sneaks to lag behind!

“‘How of the field’s fortune? That concerned our leader?
Led, we struck our stroke nor cared for doings left and right:
Each, as on his own head, failer or succeder,
Lay the blame or let the praise; no care for cowards—fight!’

“Then the cloud-rift broadens, spanning earth that’s under,
Wide our world displays its worth, man’s strife and strife’s success:
All the good and beauty, wonder crowning wonder,
Till my heart and soul applaud perfection, nothing less.”

Don’t despond, then, you who feel life’s seriousness!
Don’t lie down hopeless, you who have placed your life
under the light of the Passion! Your life is, indeed, a
serious and a dignified matter—think much of that—
because, because—there He hangs before our eyes, Lord
and Commander of us all, and says to you young men
of London, life is serious, life is dignified, life is splendid,
respect yourselves, repent of sin, strive on, hope always,
since Christ has died to conquer death.

SERMON VIII.

Life an Opportunity for Forming Character.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.”—1 PETER iv. 12, 13.

ST. PETER is speaking, as you remember, to console men under very special and very exceptional trials; for, in the days when St. Peter wrote, and for many people to whom he wrote, men, if they tried to be Christians, carried their lives in their hands. Christianity, at that moment, remember, was neither fashionable nor was it easy, nor was it any sort of kid-glove religion. Whatever else he taught, these words of St. Peter were words of consolation to men in such a condition of things. But then these words remain, and live, and ring, throughout all time and for all men. Your trials, dear friends, are not the trials of those early days; but there is no question about it, your trials are quite real, and your battle is a real conflict. You may not carry your physical life, as regards the immediate moment, in your hand; but you do carry your life for eternity. You have a hard trial, you have a battle to fight, you have a struggle to face, you have things to think of, of grave perplexity; you have, on important and critical matters, to make up your mind. No; you are not quite like the early Christians, but still you have a real

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struggle, and St. Peter may truly say to *you*, "Beloved, count it not strange that you should enter into the sufferings of Christ." Count it not strange: it is part of your calling; it is part of your trial, if your meaning is to be each, a good man. Thus also St. Peter reminds us that one dignity and one power belongs to us all. Here is the power of fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and here we learn from those sufferings something of the dignity of struggle, the reality of goodness, and the greatness of manliness, and the nobility of perseverance. We learn, also, what is a real meaning of life.

My brothers, I repeat, life is not a thing to be tampered with. Life is God's great gift. Life is to be used, and the point for every man before me is, to decide how shall he use his life to highest purpose as the opportunity for using it comes to each of us once and no more.

Well, my contention is, that the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ shows us, if we care to learn, what life means, and how life may be nobly, powerfully, usefully used. And *the* difference between a bad man and a good man may be said to be this—that a bad man never cares to think what life means, and a good man both cares to fathom what it means, and cares to act accordingly. The Crucifixion was a crime. It was always a crime, and it always will be, to fall in deliberately with abominable injustice and with pitiless cruelty. It was a crime. But the Crucifixion also was a conflict; it was a battle between real goodness and real evil. No matter whether we stand in faith or unbelief, at one point we must meet: the Crucifixion was a striking exhibition of what is noblest and most moving in elevation of character. Put aside the thought of redemption; put aside what the Church teaches us, to our great consolation,

about sacrifice, about propitiation, about forgiveness, still there stands before us, when we think of the Crucifixion, the most marvellous image of a lofty character.

If the Passion of the Lord, *since* the Passion of the Lord is true—then life is serious, life is dignified; therefore you must be self-respecting, therefore you must hope. Things are in that condition that nothing can put them right but the death of God; life means one short but real chance for us to do battle with sin. I would persuade you further to remember that your life is a grand opportunity, and, my brothers, don't lose it—a grand opportunity for forming character. Now, if we turn and fix our minds upon the Cross of Christ, there is a vivid exhibition of three or four things, which, I think, we ought never to forget.

One of God's greatest gifts to us, is Feeling. Feeling is that mysterious power whereby we are brought into touch with the outside world. Feeling is that strange play of nerves and brain whereby the sensibilities of our nature go out into the world in which we live. Feeling—it has been truly said—may be turned back against us, and when it is turned back against us, then there is a greater mystery: there is Pain.

Pain! We know it in our own bodies, we know it as seen in its results in the bodies of others. If we don't know it now we are pretty sure to know it some day. Pain! it is the root of our efforts for hospitals. Pain! it is the deepest thing in life. Turn to the Cross—what do you find? You find the highest sensitive humanity. Scientific persons tell us that we feel more in proportion to the elevation of our nature. Turn to the highest manhood, turn to the manhood re-enforced by Godhead—you find Pain of the most excruciating kind.

Go on. Side by side with pain there is the mystery of Sorrow. "Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean." Who shall unfold the mystery of tears? Turn to the Cross, and then we, sooner or later, if we have hearts, must sorrow. *There* is before us "the Man of Sorrows."

Go on. Pain, sorrow, ah! my brothers, there is a deeper thing than that—we have dwelt upon it before—there is Sin: that awful revolt of the human will against Right against God. Turn to the Cross. There is the Man, who not only carries our sorrows but bears our sins. Turn to the Cross, turn to it historically, turn to it even without the enthusiasm or gratitude of a Christian, turn to it because it is a great fact of history—*there* you have a Man torn with pain, covered with sorrow, bearing sin; and face to face with that, what have you got? You have inflexible resolution, and what is more, you have a quietude, a self-command, a gentleness, which are quite unmatched in history. Stand where you may, believe what you like, there is no picture which makes us so proud of human nature as the picture of Jesus crucified—pain at its highest, sorrow in its desolation, sin in its pressure, sin repudiated, conquered; and then quietness, resolution, determination, and the gentleness which reminds us of this great fact, that the true ideal of a man is strength and tenderness. The Cross, I submit, whatever else it is, is a vivid exhibition of human character.

My brothers, remember then, that the Cross means to us a light, showing us that life, this strange short life, this curious life of great mistakes, this life of great endeavour, this life of hope and toil and sorrow, is just this—an opportunity for forming character. And

if so, what follows? This. You, my brothers, you who have to live, and you who have to die, have a chance of forming character.

First of all, you may form what I call *tone*. There is nothing that seems to me so great, so powerful, so wonderful, so subtle as *Tone*. Stand on the Malvern Hills, there is the tone of the quiet sweetness of an English day. Stand on Monte Genaro, there is the tone of the Italian landscape. Stand on the heights above the Hudson, there is the sharp, crisp tone of the American sky. Turn to literature, there is a tone of reality and goodness in great writers. Turn to Robert Browning, there is the tone of deep sincerity, unflagging strength. Turn to Tennyson, there is the tone of sweetness, and purity, and truth. Turn to the great painters: there is Leonardo, with his far-reaching genius, cold, hard, tremendous; there is Raphael—it is true, not quite so great—yet with his Divine expression. Turn to music, to Beethoven, there is solemnity; to Mendelssohn, there is the joy of the bright spring morning; to Spohr, there is the pathetic movement of tears. Turn to a good man, and it does not matter what he says or what he does; but, if he be a *good* man, if he has an honest, sound heart, there is about him a sense of the breaking of the day, there is about him the sweetness of the breeze, there is about him the love of little children—there is tone. And remember, as you try to lead your life according to the complete self-command of Christ crucified, first of all you make about you, you have with you, that wonderful atmosphere, that sunlight, that glow, that glory, which goes with you to the office, to the study, to the street, to the market-place—you have Christian tone.

And then, remember, the Crucifixion of the Lord reminds us that we not only learn the meaning and the power of tone, but we have to go beyond all that, we are to rise into still higher heights, we are to purify affection.

I shall not dwell now on the magnificent and yet dangerous gift of human passion. I need not tell you how awful, how serious, how perfect is the gift whereby we can love: that great gift which creates friendship, which makes man's heart true to the heart of man, which creates the relation of father to son and son to father, which makes us value and understand the love of woman. I need not tell you of the greatness of affection. Go to the Crucified, and then you learn that, when you look at that exalted character, you are face to face with that which tells you what purifies affection. To-day is the feast of the Annunciation of the Mother of the Lord. To-day we remember that He who died for us loved His mother, that He was a real man, and that He died—so that just as tone is created by goodness, so affection is purified by the Cross.

Then, dear friends, there is one other trait of character. First there is tone, then there is affection. Mark my words, there is strength of will. The will is the home of treachery, and the will is the power of goodness. To get your Will strong and strict, to put your Will upon a strain, to say your Will shall govern your life and God's grace shall guide your Will; to say, even though you are weak and weary, "because that is right I will do right;" though I am weak and weary and my body tempts me, calls me, seduces me, yet I say, my Will shall govern that body. To say my tastes, my inclinations, my aspirations, my hopes call

me away, but my Will shall govern them; my brothers, *that* is to be a man—that is, when you use your glorious, your splendid Will. Ah! the deepening affection! Ah! the warmth of emotion! Ah! the realization of human love and human sorrow! Ah! the sense of the tone which is thrown round life—these are of serious importance; but then the lordly Will must govern all things. My brothers, our Wills—they are broken down. They have been bad, they have been treacherous, but by the Cross of Christ, through the power of the Passion, there is the grace which comes to the Will; and if the Will is strengthened, and if the affections are pure, and if the tone of life is right, well then, we are following in the footsteps of the Eternal; we are doing that one thing, which I would persuade you to remember under the light of the Cross—we are learning that life is a great opportunity for forming character.

Just this word, then. I don't say, I don't dare to say, it is easy. It is wrong to indulge in pretences, wrong—so to speak—to stand upon stilts, wrong to assert that it is easy to do right. Oh no, young man! you know it well. Browning only speaks the truth when he says “it is very hard to be a Christian.” I don't say it is easy; but I do say you have a great chance, a real opportunity, a true possibility. And again, remember, it is not so much the framework of your life which matters. It does not matter whether you are working in the office or living in the drawing-room. What *does* matter is that you are forming character. And further, remember this, when life is over—and life will soon be over to us all—we cannot carry away our riches, or our poverty, or our wisdom, or our name, or our fame; but we can carry away, and we

shall carry away, my brothers—don't forget it—beyond the grave, the character that we have formed here ; the amount of truth, the amount of goodness, the amount of earnestness, the amount of self-devotion, the amount of unselfishness, the amount of purity, the amount of self-conquest which we have made our own here by the grace of Christ ; these, which we may have acquired under such great difficulties, we shall carry away quite certainly, and very soon, beyond the stars.

Turn your eyes to the Crucifix. There He hangs. He hangs before modern civilization, as He hung before the Jews in the old time, to tell you the difficulty, to tell you the possibility, to tell you the beauty of goodness ; to tell you how great and serious a thing it is to form character and live for God ; to remind you that strength and tenderness are the ideal of manhood ; to remind you that this little life, is only a fragment of the great life which belongs to us all ; to remind you that day by day, and hour by hour, in all your acts and in all your determinations, in all your thoughts, in all the forces of your Will, you are forming a character for eternity. My advice then is, dear friends, use life—though it is short, though it is difficult—to form a character, which will be a *replica*, as artists would say, of the greatest and the best. Be good by means of the Cross of Christ, be good by the forgiveness of Christ, be good by the redemption of Christ. “Be good,

“ And let who will be clever ;

Do noble things, don't dream them all day long.

And so make life, death, and that vast 'for ever,'

One grand, sweet song.”

SERMON IX.

Life an Opportunity for doing Good.

"As sin has reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ."—ROM. v. 21.

WE have been trying to place life under the searchlight of the passion of the Lord. We have ventured to remember, that if it is true, that things have been in such a condition, that nothing could put them right but the death of God-made-man, then *that* death is the highest fact in history, and *that* death is something, the consequences of which must be quite incalculable. We have ventured to say, therefore, that to place life under the light of the passion of the Lord is to enable us to see, if we are in earnest about seeing, what life really means, and, under that searchlight, life—so I submit—has yielded these results. We have learned to remember that life is grave, that life is serious, that life is dignified; that as life is a great possession, given to each one of us once—once and no more—and as each one of us has to *use* life, therefore we can realize how serious, how great, how dignified, how important it is, if we place it under the searchlight of the Passion of the Master. We tried to be definite, and we learned—so I hope—that life is not only serious, grave, dignified, but that it is a great occasion for doing battle with sin. And then I have

suggested to you that, under the same light, life is the time for training of character.

Now, let us go one step further. Life, under the light of the Passion of Christ, is something more dignified still; for in all our contemplations, in all our thoughts, we have been; I may venture to say, within the ring fence of self, we have been within the action of the human Will. Now we are out on the open sea, now the winds are in our sails, now, if it is night, a night of darkness, the stars are rising, and we are able to watch how one star after another comes up over the horizon. The clouds are broken, the night is clear. We are thinking now not so much about our own souls as about the extended arena of activity, and the invaluable opportunity which comes for realizing that life is something more noble than all we have contemplated, if we believe in the Passion of Christ. What is that?

Turn again, then, for a moment, turn to the crucifix. There you have the exhibition of a great crime; there you have a deep disaster, a result of absolute injustice and pitiless cruelty. That is true. There you have also, an exhibition of a tremendous conflict; there you have further—what we have not forgotten—the showing forth of a magnificent character. Now we must dwell upon another thought. You have to remember that the crucifixion, that the Passion of our Master, is a noble example of great work done.

Now, here we are face to face with that to which the Christian Church, with that to which the Bible, with that to which—I venture to submit—common sense is committed. You are face to face with redemption. Stand where you may, think what you please, there are dark moments when you must feel that certainly you

cannot save yourself. You may find fault with the doctrine of atonement; but if you remember the real facts you will not find fault. You will find it is true that you are confronted by a mystery. But, then, when they are face to face with a fact, good men and wise men do not run their heads against a wall; they learn not to quarrel with it, but to take its measure and use it accordingly. For a mystery is a fact; only, like Salvator's "Hope," it is "dark-veiled." A mystery is a fact; if concealed it is at least half revealed, and we are sinners, and we have dark moments, and we have grave temptations, and we cannot save ourselves. And then there comes Christianity, and we find just this—just this—man's Representative, the highest God, and yet the perfect Man, has paid the forfeit for sin; for yours, for mine. Man's Representative has been the spring of grace, man's Representative has been the sure hope and help towards better things, man's Representative, in one word, has made not only goodness beautiful, but He has made goodness possible. That is the doctrine of redemption. As sin reigned unto death, so grace reigns through goodness unto life in Jesus Christ.

Then, fellow sinner, we may turn to life, and ask ourselves in quiet earnestness, if the Passion was a serious transaction between heaven and earth, if Christ paid forfeit for every sin, if Christ is the source of grace, if Christ is not only the example but the power, the possibility of righteousness—then what is life? Then, I answer, life is a valuable opportunity for doing good; life is a great occasion for standing up for what is right; life is an effective power, placed in the hands of each one of us for throwing forward—if we care to do so—the frontier of the Kingdom of God.

My brothers, to have such a power as that is, awakens a noble enthusiasm. Does not that stir the highest emotions, does it not call you to the noblest things, does it not remind you that, here and now, in this short pilgrimage, we, each of us, whether in the drawing-room, in the street, in the city, in the warehouse—wherever we stand, if we use our life in the power of the Passion, can do the greatest of all things, can throw forward the realm of goodness, can throw forward the frontier of the Kingdom of God. And if that be the real use of life, which is the view I would have you take, there are three things you must not forget. First—and here I borrow the thought, although I cannot borrow the words of one whose words must always be weighty—I remind you that there are three orders of excellence which every man may put before him as he faces life. There is the order of excellence which comes from power. There is the wonder of language, and, its correlative, thought; there is the greatness of the extent of actual natural facts; for instance, there is the power of the hurricane, there is the power of the sea-wave, there is the power of the storm, there is the power of the thunder shock. And, turn to man, there is the power of intellect, the power of incisive thought, of intellectual superiority; there are powers of these kinds, forms of marvellous products of the Wisdom of God.

There is another form of excellence. There is Wisdom. There is the knowledge that helps us to rise above things seen to things not seen, that helps us to learn, to know, to enter into the mysterious unknown, to enter into the things of present discovery and knowledge.

There is a third order of excellence. Besides power, besides wisdom, a third order is the highest, noblest of all—the possibility of Goodness, of doing right because it is right. The greatness of conscience, the greatness of reality, the greatness of self-conquest, the greatness of truth, the greatness of simple sincerity. Wherever it stands there is goodness holding an “easy primacy” amongst all the objects of man’s ambition, amidst all the possibilities of human achievement. Oh! once again settle it in our minds, if we are to learn from the Passion, that life is for this purpose—for illustrating by ourselves the *goodness* of God.

There is a second thing we must settle in our minds. Not only are we to admire the greatness and the wonder of goodness as it is shown to us in the person of our Master, we must also decide that there is a line of action which we are bound to adopt. There is, of course, one theory of action which would incline us to imagine that our calling is to success. Servant of Christ, child of the crucifix, born for eternity, with a short life, remember the real theory of action is this—it is service—to place your mind, your thoughts, your nerves, your muscles, your money, your place, your fame, at the disposal of another; to work under the eye of the Unseen, to remember that all the love, and all the sweetness, and all the pleasures, and all the loyalty or happy circumstances, that He is good enough to give you from dear friends, is only the whispering of his deep compassion; to remember that you are not listening for the plaudits of the multitude, that you are not trying to find out what men will say about you, who are learning to live as the servants of God, but that you are listening to catch the first words of the Eternal—“Well done, well done,

well done, good and faithful servant ;" this is important. You have to settle it in your minds that life is service, and that you are striving supremely for the praise of God. And then, we must determine not to look too eagerly to results if we mean to tread the path of duty, but, having done our duty, leave the rest to God. You remember the story of the drummer-boy at Waterloo. It is said that they found the little lad wrapt round with cannon's smoke in the thick of the battle ; that they asked him how his work could be any use, and what led him to the folly of being in such a place of danger ; and that the boy answered, " I don't know what good I am ; I only know I was sent here. What the reason is, is known to the commander-in-chief ! " We must not be looking too steadily to results, if our life is to be a life of goodness. The victory is in the hands of the Leader. The consequences must be left to Him. Our duty is simply to obey.

There it is, then ; first remember the greatness of goodness, then remember that life is service, and then, not to look for immediate results, but to leave the consequences to Christ. If so, then I repeat life becomes a great opportunity for advancing the kingdom of God.

In view of the Passion, we must try so to do. There is plenty of room for such labour. There is society, so hollow—civilized society—so pretentious, so pharisaical, and, from some points of view, so saddening ; there is society to be conquered, to be lifted up, to be purified by the gospel. There is the young advancing life of London to be raised to higher things. There are young men about you, strong, and with so much that might help their generation, possessing the strength and depth of the

noble English character. These you can help, if you will, to do right—not to read bad literature, not to think bad thoughts, not to join in bad conversation, not to forget the greatness of a mind stored with thoughts of beauty, not to forget the dignity of woman and the destructiveness of lust. There are those about you whom you can influence if you make life a time for studying and practising goodness. There is Christendom so broken. There are countries which try to do their duty, and are hindered by some who call themselves Christians. There is the serious question of religious education. Think of the party spirit which induces otherwise good men to stand in the way of elementary justice and parental rights in religious education. There is marriage; think of the efforts made, even in unexpected quarters, to encourage the slackening of that sacred tie. Think of the detestable enormities of the divorce court. Think of men trying to give non-natural meanings to the language of the marriage service. Think of the terrible readiness to forget the seriousness of the power of transmitting life.

Yes, there is plenty of room. You need not look to left or right, but only endeavour to do your duty where God has placed you. And then your life will be like the life of your Master, a great power to throw forward the frontier of the Kingdom of God. Remember *that* effort will be the best thing to conquer your own sin. Certainly you must repent, certainly you must have self-discipline, certainly you must conquer self; but the greatest way to conquer the children of the night, and advance towards the morning, is to put your foot on the track of the dawn. A grand way for not being a player in the midst of life's reality is to have

a quiet enthusiasm for goodness, and to settle it in your minds earnestly to do all the good you can.

And then, this last word. Don't be frightened by apparent failure. Last night, passing through London, one read on a newspaper placard, "Turkey protests." Without dwelling on details it appeared that because England desires to do her duty towards Egypt "Turkey protests." It affords an illustration of the life we must lead, my brothers, if we are to live for goodness for the kingdom of God. The devil protests; he will protest whenever he can, you may be quite sure, and he will further get others to protest along with him. Treat his protest for what it is worth—not worth the paper on which it may be written. Treat the devil's protest as something which helps you to feel that you must fight on. Never mind about apparent failure when you try to do right. Better high failure than low successes. Never mind; it does not matter what men say. Be brave, be true; deserve the "respect of your fellow-countrymen, and the love of your fireside;" have lowly thoughts about yourself, and high thoughts about others. Bear good fortune meekly. Through evil, through good, uphold truth always. Keep before you that magnificent image of the crucifix in its moral splendour; bring it close to your heart, for it is to you *the* power of forgiveness and of help. And then remember how you can make your life like the life of the greatest—an opportunity for doing good. You are throwing forward the frontier of the kingdom of God. As sin has reigned unto death, so—through you, if you keep near Christ, through you—grace will reign unto goodness and to eternal life by Jesus Christ. And you will hear amidst your darkness, amidst your difficulties, amidst your

failures, my brothers, amidst your mistakes you will begin to hear that voice of eternity ringing through the soul of the simple-hearted man who has tried to serve God, "Well done, well done, good and faithful servant, thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord."

SERMON X.

Labour in the Light of the Passion.

"I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do."—ST. JOHN xvii. 4.

THAT was the cry, the solemn, the majestic, the unflinching cry of the Representative man, when, passing the Kedron on the night of His sufferings, He began the great oblation by which we are saved. Now, once again, we are permitted, by God's Providence, and in the course of the Church's teaching—not, I hope, without serious thankfulness—not, I am sure, without deep heart-searching, to stand face to face with the Passion of the Lord. Serious thankfulness that time is still given to every one of us to make the most of opportunities, and to retrace our steps if our steps have gone wrong; and great heart-searchings, lest perhaps, not like the green grass receiving the falling showers and bringing out the flowers of spring, but like the cold, grey, soft and lifeless consistency of the sand under the receding sea, we may come, once more, face to face with the fact of facts, and yet be left not enriched and fruitful, but cold and lifeless and hard. God give us grace, as once again we cross the threshold of Passiontide, to be thankful for the renewed opportunity, and to search our hearts that we may use it well.

Now, in the meditation, which can be only short and suggestive, of so great a subject as the Passion, three truths must govern our hearts.

First, there can be no question, in any religious mind, that God is very near to us, "in whom we live and move and have our being." But the human heart strains with great fatigue towards the illimitable and the eternal and the infinite, and it flags in its flight, and, as it flags, it is very much tempted—is it not?—amid the common influences of time, and face to face with the great thought of God—to give the whole thing up in distrust and despair. That surely is half the history of despairing atheism; for to be near God in fact is one thing, to be near God in thought is another.

Now the Christian revelation comes and says, "Whatever may be said for atheism or deism, this can be said for Christianity, 'God, that we feel so near and yet so far away; God, to think of whom strains our thought, and yet whom we can never quite forget; God, to be in contact with whom is the yearning of our humanity; God is brought within arm-sweep, nay, within closest touch in Jesus Christ.'"

And the second truth that must govern our meditations is this. There are two great forces in this world with which no other forces can compare. One has a magnificent universal law, and it has a colour of religious fact; it is fiercer than the sea, it is stronger than the storm; and yet it touches every heart. Sometimes you find its shadow in the cottage; sometimes you find the shadow of its power in the palace; but wherever you go, you know this force that men may reason about, or argue about as they please, that men may construe as they choose, but there it is.

There is another force side by side with that, the highest moral force that ever has been brought to bear, or ever yet shall be brought to bear upon that strange, sad, romantic thing, the human heart. You may tell this force through the affections given you in human life; you may traverse it, you may make of it a mere simulacrum or call it a delusion, you may have it almost destroyed by the cynic's philosophy, but it is the force of forces. My brothers, there are two powers in this world—Love and Death.

Now mark these two great powers which play upon us all—they tried conclusions on the Person of God in the Passion, and if God be brought us in Jesus Christ, then God is not only brought near us, but He is brought near us under the circumstances of a tremendous conflict—a conflict between the most powerful forces, Love and Death. And the Christian preacher announces that—to speak with great restraint—in the Passion of our most dear Master, the cry of the prophet is true, "Love is as strong as death."

Then there is a third truth which must govern our meditations. If God be near in Jesus Christ, if love and death met in their highest conflict, and in their final and splendid—so the Christians think—their splendid expression on the cross, then we remember that all the magnificence of God's eternal being, that all the sweetness of Christ's human nature, that all the final expressions of what man yearns for, and what we desire, will be found—they must be found—in that last great sermon on the cross given to us to instruct, to sanctify, and to redeem.

My brothers, in this sacred week, do not forget these great truths, and let us apply them, for a moment, here and now.

In the uplands of Attica, as you travel along, you find peaks of rock, you find slopes covered with olive, and here and there you find the stray pinewood, and there and here the pasture for the shepherd's flocks, and sometimes the corn-land. But when you do find that—be it rock, or be it olive, or be it pinewood, or be it the lonely bank—under the clear light of those skies, in the sunlight and in the shadow, there is a sentiment, there is a teaching belonging to each district of its own. It is a land of poetry ; a land of dreams. My brothers, in human life there are districts like the uplands of Attica, districts across which, I submit, we must pass in the toils of our mortal pilgrimage—sometimes commonplace like the cloudland, sometimes romantic like the olive and the pine. But they have their own sentiments ; they have their own power according to the light and the shadow under which they are placed. My brothers, what I challenge you to do is this : take some important districts of your experience, and place them under the light and the shadow of the Passion. Take one district for a moment, commonplace, easy. Whatever else is true or false of man, it is strictly true that for every one of us life expresses activity, and activity in the commonplace way goes out in work. Go anywhere in the world, and you will never find that great word "work" more strong and powerful than in the city. Here is the place of commercial enterprise, here is the place of fresh investment, here is the place of new undertakings of every kind. If any man may be sure of speaking to the heart of the congregation of the faithful, it is that man who speaks in a city who is quite sure that he is understood when he says "Work." And when you go down out of great

enterprises to smaller things, from the head of an important firm to the last lad who has been engaged in the office, or the last porter that carries the message—there is the understanding of work. Our great ancestors in the past understood it, my brothers; so do we.

Put that under the light, and under the shadow of the Passion. If ever there was an age when work was remembered, it is this age when men are discussing the claims of labour; but the pulpit and the parson are not the place nor the person to enter into details of economic difficulty; but the pulpit and the parson are the place and the person to appeal to the individual soul that has to labour, and to ask it, "What do you mean by your work under the light and the shadow of the Passion?" We have to work. Go back to the crucified, you will find these things: among all His works there was no work so beautiful, so eternal, so kind, so determined as His death. And the first message, I submit, that He left behind to the working creature is diligence. The world He came to save cannot endure an idler; you are to follow His path. I don't care where you work, diligent you must be.

The next message that he left us was honesty. Certainly He might have evaded the great trial of the contumely and scorn of the night of His sorrow if He had made a manœuvre or played a part. I am told—I know nothing about it—that the commercial life of England is undermined, is honeycombed with dishonesty. I can well imagine that there are few trials more tremendous to the young men who have to work in the city, than to be truly honest amidst immense difficulties, and without much sympathy, and, my brothers, very often without much hope. Look up to that life that

seemed a failure; whatever He did He entered into the reality of things. He was not only diligent, he was determinedly honest.

And then there is a last light of the district of work from the Passion. It is this. They that follow Him who died must indeed desire diligence and seek for honesty; but further: the temptation of the moment, so it seems to me, is to make a show, to create an impression, to stand on stilts, to be heard of in the newspapers, to advertise one's self, to carry out what my American friends used to call—I hope I may say without forgetting the dignity of the place I speak in—to carry out a big boom. Now the work of the Passion was marked by this hidden reality; and don't forget, young Christian, face to face with your dying Master, that all the world's fun and pleasure pass by in making up a man's account. All that you long to be, all that you ever can be, will depend upon your faithfulness to Christ. That you are worthy to act, to work diligently, honestly, hiddenly, not because you are talked of, not because they praise you in the office, but because the great, and blessed, and beautiful, and lasting One has given you a work to do, and He will take the measure of it, and He will be your reward—that is the thing to think of.

The last message of the Passion, under the government of these great thoughts, and in this district of discussion, is *work hiddenly*. For remember, not what is flashy, not what is telling, not what is popular is important, but the hidden reality of things. Take that district of your life "work," and place it thus under the light of the Passion, and then recall His words, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do." Do not,

then, despise your common duty, but remember its dignity—God gave it you to do. Watching it in the shadow, certainly we are reminded that our work must come to an end; that the night is coming, and that the day is shortlived, and that we must make the most of our opportunity.

Never, it seems to me, in the history of humanity, did any man dare to say, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do," except the crucified Christ. I know nothing sadder, I know nothing more pathetic, than unfinished labour. There was Mendelssohn, with the joy of his young heart, and the thrilling pleasure of his music, died before it was half done; there was Beethoven, and he never lived to hear the ninth symphony; there was Dante, and he knew—yes! he among men knew, that he was immortal before he died—but he did not live long enough to make his peace with Florence. And I cannot stand in this pulpit this morning, with the gap of a ghastly year, without remembering that never again, no, never again, shall we hear the thrilling music of that exquisite voice, so full of penetrating force, or be touched with the piercing power of that unexampled eloquence that once, in God's mercy, was given to St. Paul's. We might have hoped that our dear and venerated friend might have worked for many years for us. It was not to be. Unfinished labour is the mark of God's call; but it does say this—and my beloved friend, Dr. Liddon, above all men, would have felt it and taught it—it does say this, that all work should be diligent, and honest, and serious, and hidden; and that in the last resort, when you and I have failed or fainted, there is One that has done a finished work; and if we have not been diligent, and

if we have not been honest, and if we have been unreal, at least, we can creep to the feet of the great Worker who died for all of us.

We will try as we may, then, to do our work. Watch some district of light under the work of the Passion. We may ask the serious practical question—Is my work diligent? is my work honest? is my work real? And wherever we have failed in that, let us go, as time is given to us, to the feet, to the bleeding feet of Jesus Christ.

“Labouring and heavy laden,
Wanting strength in time of need,
Fainting by the way from hunger,
Bread of Life, on Thee we feed.”

SERMON XI.

Society in the Light of the Passion.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”—ST. JOHN xii. 24.

IN these words, dear friends, our most blessed Master revealed, it appears probably on the Monday of Holy Week, to the Greek proselytes, the power, the lasting power of His Passion. And, face to face with that tremendous event which is in the minds of all Christians, and especially of ourselves just now, we feel, as those who heard Him must have felt, that we are out upon an unbounded and illimitable sea, that we are on a subject which we may study for ever, and never find the end of; no, not to the confines of eternity. But we also feel—do we not?—that when we contemplate the power of the Passion, we are in fact bringing life under a strong light.

From the cliffs at Sunium, when there was no regulated light on the coast-line, one remembers how the mystery and the majesty and the motion of the sea were shot across with gold and glory, and how every cleft of the cliffs was revealed with mysterious and photographic exactness by the power of a beacon light.

Now, life lies before us like that, and though there may not be a regulated light according to man's artistic

perceptions, or according to the thoughts which suit him at the moment, life lies under the beacon light, now and again to be flashed upon it, of the Passion of the Lord. You will not forget that every thought that we have on life under such light must be governed by the three truths of which I have reminded you. First, we must never forget the nearness in fact, and the farness in thought of God. Next, we must never forget that that farness in thought is deceptive, and we are brought nearer to the nearness in fact by the Incarnation of our Master, so that in Christ we see God. And, thirdly, we must never forget that if God is to be seen in Christ to a practical and fruitful purpose, then the best moment for seeing Him is when the two great powers that we all know so well tried their conclusions with Him—the powers of love and death.

Remembering these governing thoughts, we fixed our eyes on one solemn and circumscribed district of human effort, and inspected swiftly the thought of "work." Now, I ask you, under the same strong light, to remember another district of human enterprise, larger, and which touches us all.

Man, after all, is not only placed as man and master, he not only lives as employer and employed, he not only works, but there are between him and his fellow-creatures very serious, and constant, and complex relations; and those relations are summed up, I submit, in the name of one district of human enterprise, and I can call it by no better name than *Society*. Place society there—define it as you may—under the beacon light of the Passion, and then you learn a lesson. My brothers, we do not waste our passing moments in defining Society. We need not use the word in the

limited and conventional sense in which it sometimes is employed, for instance, and in which it is used by a certain class of newspaper. Without defining more strictly, I will only remember that, apart from work, and apart from sorrow, you and I must live in a vast community with laws of its own, with habits and propensities, with tendencies sometimes good and sometimes bad. We are members of Society. What do we make of that district of human endeavour under the beacon light of the Passion. This, I submit. Our blessed Master, when He came to the world, found Society. What did He do with it? First of all, He broke it in pieces, and He left the fragments scattered around His bleeding feet. He broke it, mark, by the strange and awful sayings of His preaching. And, after all, they are only, as your own great dean, who is dead, used often to say, they are only the generalizations of the act of His life and death. He broke it in pieces by the high claim and the tremendous power that He asserted for men contrary to their immediate imagination and pretensions. He broke it in pieces because He spread before men a new view, and He required of the men who followed His footsteps that where they were welcomed, or where they were called false, they were to treat that which for the most part was supposed in the Society of the moment to be important, as something to be set aside as utterly unimportant and of the smallest interest. He taught the men who followed His footsteps, to speak, yes, to speak with scorn of the present evil world.

My brothers, the Parthenon at Athens and the Pantheon at Rome, and the great system of Roman energy shown in the empire, and the greater system of Greek

philosophy, went into fragments and into pieces, into nothingness, under that strange dissolvent of the cross. He took Society and He broke it in pieces.

Now, mark, if He only did that, we would have said, "What am I, and what are we to do? We belong to Society, whether we like it or not. Is there any help from a negative reform that smashes and nothing more?" My brothers, He not only broke it, He remade it.

Among our barbarian ancestors, with their high manliness, with their sense of hard work, with their glorious enthusiasm for purity, with their splendid joy and hope, with their respect for law, and, above all, with their deep and ennobling struggle for reality—He came and re-made Society, and from the loins of those men we have sprung. He came to the broken-down Roman system of life, and He enabled that civilization to find its best results in Christianity. He came to the hopeless Greek philosophy, and He did the same. I recommend you, if you want to read the details of the work of the Crucified in re-making Society, I recommend you to read the ninth chapter of Gibbon; and I recommend you more still to study those lectures, which ought never to be forgotten, delivered, I believe, in the crypt of this cathedral, by the greatest Christian teacher of modern time, by the dean whom you have lost. But, apart from detail, I recommend you to-day to remember that He re-made Society by the fact of the cross. He brought before man—for, after all, man, however lost and low, is capable of understanding greatness and beauty—He brought before man two forms of human excellence; and He brought before man one great and energetic power. He taught men on the cross—and

they had never learned it before—that the greatest of all things, my brothers, is not self-assertion, but self-forgetfulness; that the really powerful thing is humility—which is, in fact, reality; He brought before men another form of excellence—that form, I submit, which more than any other holds Society, especially English Society, together. He brought before men the magnificent force of real and lasting patience. But He went further than that. He brought before men the fact that the cross, the dying of God for the sake of goodness, was a widening of the human horizon, and that henceforth Society must not forget it. He broke and He re-made Society.

He did one thing more. He grasped it in His hand. Yes, and I submit, in spite of all the corruptions, and all the sorrows, and all the miserable pantomime of wretched failure, He grasps it until that day when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ.” He grasped the Society that He re-made.

I am not oblivious of the fact that there are many things in London Society most unchristian. Still we cannot forget the fact that the cross has made of Society something engrafted on to Christianity, such as it never could have been without Christ crucified. Why? Think! Oh, my friends, whatever mess we make of life, it is Christ crucified that has enabled men and women to make of instruments and of opportunities which would be naturally against God, channels of goodness. Is there anything, for instance, more unlike Christianity than war? Is there anything more unlike the Sermon on the Mount than trade? And yet there are soldiers who have been the very patterns of

goodness, and there are tradesmen in the City who are the very sources of Christian life !

He took the common things, and He made them instruments in Society for high thought and noble purpose ; for, indeed, He insisted on His cross, and, my brothers, I insist on it now, that the Christian Church ever demands what every man and woman in this present moment and in this passing life must feel to be, that they are here placed to do their duty if they are to be prepared for eternity. But that when all is said, when you have played your part in the workshop, when you have been kind and courteous in the drawing-room, when you have done your duty in the counting-house, when you have spoken your best at the public meeting, when you have never forgotten the claims of courtesy, when you have never allowed yourself to be carried away by the whirlwind of scorn, that there still remains that tremendous picture of the great One on the cross to say, " Do your best, accept your Society, take your place ; recognize your responsibility, but don't forget that if it is to be great and lasting in its power, it must be swallowed up by the thought that the present is the parent of the future, and that the Christian spirit must dominate all.

My brothers, this word, then, about Society, and I have done. Certainly, the danger is that the tradition of evil, the corrupt tendency, in your heart and mine, multiplied in a thousand hearts, may create an atmosphere, may make the lady at the West-end proud, and unreal, and worldly, and the soldier cruel and unkind, and the mother enjoy herself instead of studying her children, and the young man in the office think of amusement instead of thinking of duty. There is

the world against the Crucified. But, oh, don't forget it, don't forget this, "If the corn of wheat, if the surrender of the greatest and the best of man's nature, die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Don't forget this. You may go your way in Society, you may fall into the channels of momentary thought and believe that there are many things with which your Christian spirit may combine; but there is one thing that it will not combine with, there is one thing that will guide you in social life. As the servant of the Crucified, combine with anything you please in a Christian spirit; but, my brothers, you cannot, you dare not, combine with selfishness. To seek myself instead of spending my brain, my nerves, my heart, my reputation, for others, to seek myself is to forget the cross. But to go out in a self-subdued and self-sacrificing spirit—with that governing power of the Lord and His Passion, that is to have a talisman that keeps you safe.

Dear young men, as we part, let me remind you that in Society, in modern times, there are two departments that seem unlike Christ, and yet the corn of wheat has come up and has burst out of them both. There is art, there is literature. Make the most of art in its beauty. Make the most of literature in its splendour. But, young men, let me give you one word of practical advice. In Society, where art and literature are details of the progress of the present, remember there is nothing so dreadful as using art to arouse and debase your passions; there is nothing so bad for a high, good mind, as, in plain English, bad books. Christ to Society says, "Great thoughts, noble purposes, real unselfishness, and a high sense of duty." But, whatever comes, whatever goes—the splendour of politics, the

delirium of music, the splendid height of art, and the increasing claims of literature, and the complex relations of all of us one to another—whatever comes, whatever goes, the Cross says, “Don’t forget.” The present, after all, is subordinate to the future, and if you are carried away by Society, come back, come back to the Lord that loves you. There is no doubt He will help you—no doubt at all.

“Thou the grace of life supplying,
Thou the strength for life will give.”

Wherever we stand, whatever we do, dead to self and daily dying; Life of life, by Him in Society now, and in that great Society of pure and perfect beauty beyond the grave—take courage.

“Life of life, by Him we live.”

SERMON XII.

Moral Life in the Light of the Passion.

"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it."—EPh. v. 25, 26.

SUCH, dear friends, is one view taken by St. Paul of the meaning of the Passion of the Lord, and, with his usual practical sense, he takes hold of a great truth like the suffering of our Master, and applies it to the most common things. St. Paul, as we know, is in many respects the Apostle of the Passion. He stands marked among all the Apostles by his striking way of taking high things and making them do common duties. Now, in this, we are endeavouring to follow him. We try to view, under the light of the Passion, some common district of human experience. You will bear with me, if I remind you again that that duty is best fulfilled under the shadow of three governing thoughts. (1) While God is very near in fact, He is often very far in thought; and so the chasm has to be bridged between the real truth of His nearness and of our constant failure to realize that truth; (2) that it has been bridged by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; (3) that the meaning of God's nearness to ourselves, as brought about by the Incarnation, is seen most clearly when conclusions were tried on the Cross between love and death. And therefore, under the

light of the Passion, some one district of life may be viewed by us, even this side the grave, with something like approximate accuracy and real knowledge.

We have remembered that Christ teaches us something about that district of man's activity which we call, roughly, work. We have not forgotten that man's activity is not only shown when he is in touch with outer things, but there are complex relations existing between man and man. Christ crucified illuminates the true meaning of what we call Society.

Now there is another district of human experience which we shall place under the illuminating influence of the Cross of Christ. Looking at Society face to face with the Passion, we felt that the Cross was like a beacon. But, my brothers, in man's deeper self, though not apart altogether from his outward relation to those around him, there is a constant sway and swell and rise and fall of being, like the heaving sea, which never seems at rest, and which has to do with the deepest experiences of every soul. For *that* we want a search-light of vivid power—and we have it in the Passion. Stand on a man-of-war when the fleet is on the alert for an enemy, supposed or real, and watch experiments, and watch how, as the night deepens down, first in the waters near, then on the farthest expanse, then on the highest cliffs, then on the little boats about the harbour, then on the chinks and crannies of the rocks, the fierce and penetrating search-light insists on telling the truth.

Now, there is one district of man's human experience which it were well to place under the search-light of the Passion. That is man's moral life. For mark, it is well said that "in each one of us there are at least three forces, sometimes in alliance, sometimes in battle." First, there

are the passions: they emerge, it may be, and move like the noble figures in a stately drama, clothed in their splendid garments, across the stage; or they flash forth, it may be, like the bright beams of a morning which is the prophecy and promise of a glorious day, and yet, with advancing hours, rumbles into storm; they come sometimes like a surging mob demanding the life of some enemy whom they hate, or not unlike a pack of hounds yelling for the creature which they have been hunting to death. But wherever they come, or however they look in every human creature destined for Eternity, and having to live his life, his mortal life, with more or less intensity—there they are.

Then there is a second force. There is law. There is a high certainty of absolute right, and the right it has to be obeyed by man. As old as God, and therefore part of God, as certain as mathematics—certain and yet dealing with a different district—the law that right is right, and wrong is wrong, and that iniquity cannot go unpunished: this sense is, more or less clearly, within man from the constitution of his nature. And, with this there is conscience, sometimes discordant from inattention to it, and sometimes tuned to play, and to play clearly, and always making an effort to assert the necessity of obedience to law and truth and beauty.

And then there is another force, if so I may call it. There is liberty—the majestic power in the soul whereby, no matter what be the law of right or wrong, no matter what be the attractive power or transcending seductions of the passions, no matter what be the voice of conscience—the majestic power by which, after all, my brothers, you and I decide our destiny, and are to decide it and to choose what we will. Now, I submit, with these

forces either at war or in alliance with one another, one of two things are sure to be in the plane of the moral life, viz. cleansing or corruption. And when we look out into the world, dear friends, and when—what is better, perhaps—we look into our own hearts, we find a great deal of what St. John calls “the corruption that is in the world through lust.” And when we fall back upon the cry of the Apostle, for warning, for teaching, for helpfulness, for light, for strength, for stimulus to try again, we cannot forget “He loved His Church, and gave Himself that He might sanctify and cleanse it.”

I pause to ask, Does any man before me, conscious of the dire and splendid forces of the moral life, feel that they in him are in deep need of cleansing? Then don't forget this message, That cleansing can be had from the crucified Christ.

But then you will not, as you place the search-light of the Passion across the plains of your mortal experience, you will not forget—and you must not permit yourselves, my brothers, to put it from your minds—that there are three facts which concern these forces, and make them really important. First, there is a living Being who concerns Himself with these. In a way He is out of fashion. In a way it is difficult apparently for men in this age to listen with patience if one speaks of Him from the pulpit. Still, the Christian revelation reminds us, and if we are quite honest we shall take care to remind ourselves, there is a Personal Spirit who is engaged in using these forces, so far as he can sway them, for our destruction. He leaves a trail wherever he goes. What is it? Well, he is the enemy of truth; he is a liar. Truth is lovely, but across the beauty of truth there is often the dash of darkness from the Devil. Lovelier than truth is love.

But I want to know who is so eminent at inspiring hatred, and who is so powerful at stimulating murder? Across the love of man to man, of man to woman, there is the dash of darkness from the Devil.

Fairer than truth, brighter than love, coming before them both, and furnishing the ingredients and force for each, there is life—that wondrous thing which no man can define, yet which we feel, which moves us all; to have which, is to have a great endowment; to lose which, would be serious and even tremendous; to feel the decaying force of which, is our greatest sorrow. Who is it that throws across life the darkness of evil, but the Devil? Truth, and Life, and Love are dashed by his darkness; and, my brother, when your eyes are closed to the greatness of Eternity; when you are filled with hatred or scorn; when you are tempted, for example, to commercial dishonesty, or to the speaking or acting of lies, then, I submit, you may know pretty certainly who is at your elbow. But you have something to match the corrupting influences of Satan—there is the cleansing of Christ.

Then there is a fact to be remembered. We all acknowledge, for we feel that there is in each one of us, a corrupt tendency, turning the things of this world—which might help us, which might advance us—into serious obstacles in the way of goodness and God. Multiply each of us by hundreds, thousands, millions of men who have lived; think of the vast extent of that corrupt tendency which belongs to us, as it did, we know, to them; and then you begin to realize how you are breathing, in moral matters, in physical matters, as in one of your fogs in London. Then you are like one wandering on the Pontine Marshes while the miasma

rises at nightfall. Then you find it difficult to breathe freely. You are, in fact, the victim of "the world" as conceived by St. John. Thus it acts. It stains the moral life, it lowers high thought, it pulls down the notion of God, it makes you laugh at the seriousness of sin. And just as Christ, when living His earthly life, dared to sweep away the things of Time as being comparatively trivial, so the world treats as comparatively trivial, and endeavours to sweep aside, the things of Eternity, and to throw its dark shadow across your moral life.

Look yonder at that girl, once—in the beginning of life—so simple, so true, so modest. A few London seasons have told upon her: she seems to think nothing worth her efforts but a bid for a rich husband, or a marriage of position, regardless now, alas! of truth and duty, and nobler ends. Look, and say "Why?" The answer is, "The world." Look at that lad in the city. He came up from the country earnest and pure; he meant to do his duty. He is beginning to learn petty dishonesties, petty untruths; ay, alas! worse things than these. And you ask "Why?" "The world."

Look at that clergyman who began his life meaning to speak the truth, and fear not any man. Watch him seeking more now to be popular in Society, watch him dexterously bidding for "preferment," watch him toning down his doctrine to the level of popular prejudice, and ask the meaning of that corruption. The answer is—"The world."

And we, with that serious force playing on our moral life, my brother, we are too often stained. Can we be cleansed? My answer to-day is, As Christ's Passion was powerful to break the power of the Devil, so Christ on the Cross convicted and conquered "the world."

And then, in your moral life there remains that power which we so well understand, which it is so necessary to touch upon, but to touch upon with self-restraint and care. There is nothing wrong in the possession of *desire*. It is the old story, often repeated, that Desire is the "raw material of goodness" or the "raw material of sin." But it is infinitely wrong that we should not regulate desire; and to allow the lower and sensitive nature so to use the passions, or to misuse liberty, as to defy God's law, and so to close the ear to the voice of conscience—to do *that*, is to be the victim of "the flesh." And if you are the victim of the flesh, you must die. Die in the intellectual, die in the moral nature. Die!—yes, die in the finer sensibilities; die, above all, in the power of loving, and in the power of loving God.

Now, in that moral life which Christ came to cleanse, there is a living power to help you still.

Remember the difficulty of conquering the flesh—yes, it is quite enormous. Remember that I am the last to pretend to you that I think your temptations are light or contemptible. Enormous the difficulty, implacable the enemy; but, even from this chair of truth, there is no irreverence in using the familiar expression, "the game is worth the candle." To conquer "the flesh" is, above all things, *to be a good man*. And, throwing the search-light of the Passion on our moral life, we cannot but remember two things. We are taught by that crucified form the respect—yes, dear friends, the very real respect—that each of us owes to our own body: that temple of the Holy Ghost, that soil of immortal consciousness, that which shall be transformed—though it is a body of humiliation—by His mercy, into a likeness

of the body of His glory. And if you respect your body, then, my brother, you will not fail in respect for the bodies of others.

Then, there is a truth which the Passion brings home—it serves to remind us, in the moral life, of that high respect and that real reverence that there ought to be from man to woman, and woman to man. For women, God has appointed it so, are meant to be the representatives of lofty ideals. Tied to the human race—as He is—the tie which bound our Blessed Master was not from the stronger, but from the weaker sex. Dying on the Cross, our Blessed Master had by Him, indeed, the representative of friendship; but, standing by the Cross also, was the noblest creature ever made by God, and She was a woman. For a woman to forget her responsibility, to forget that flood of perfect sympathy which she, above all, has at her command, and the deep laws of our nature by which she exercises quite an electric influence over man—to forget *that*, is to fall from a lofty altitude.

But, my brother, for a man—for a man to forget that, if the woman is the glory of the man, he, the man, is the glory of God; for a man to forget the dignity and the greatness of a woman; to think of her or treat her as an instrument of degraded passion; to forget her place, her dignity, her destiny; to forget what is due to her as from one human creature to another, and from the stronger to the weaker; to forget what is due to her, if he be a lover; to forget what is due to her of considerateness, and tenderness, and thoughtfulness, and strength, if he be a husband; to forget *that*—that is to play the part of a selfish coward. That is to forget that we are made in the very image of God. That is to tear in shreds the moral life.

Have you ever done it in any form? That is a serious question which you are led to face. And again I say, God forbid that, if you have—through the greatness of temptation, the power of the flesh, the force of the world, or the guile of the Devil—God forbid that the ministers of a crucified Master should be hard upon you. But this I say, as to a life of purity—it is hard, but it is possible. This I say—victory is assured to those who keep in communion steadily with Jesus Christ. This I say—there are two visions vastly beautiful. Think of them, follow them. They will help you in the struggles of the moral life. Bright are the woods above the Hudson when the sun is rising in the autumn day; great is the splendour of the peaks as they emerge like the air sketches of the Loggia, taking life from the brush of Raphael; sweet is the face of a sleeping child; tender the colouring of the woods in autumn, or the wild-flowers in spring; tender is soft music in the summer night, and gladdening also the voice of joyous friends; but I will tell you what is more beautiful—the life of a young man who, under the forces of his moral nature when exposed to the temptations of the world, and the flesh, and the Devil, keeps himself pure. “Keep innocency, and do the thing that is right.”

Or, if he has not done it, poor fellow! but if he goes back—goes back with manly determination and unflinching endeavour to the feet—the cleansing feet—of Christ, and, in penitence, renews the purposes of his moral life,—that is a splendid spectacle.

My brothers, this world measures things by immensity of bulk, but God measures them by intensity of will and affection. Have you sinned? Try again. And as that vision is splendid, so the science that

it leads to is the greatest. Of that I need scarcely speak from this place. I think it was from this—at any rate, it was from some English pulpit, that your great Dean, who is gone, reminded us all—and we can never forget it—that very great may be art, very glorious literature, very striking political strength, but that the one thing that is really splendid, the one thing within reach of us all, and yet costing a tremendous effort, is the science of goodness. Large are the issues, and noble is the science, of doing right because it is right.

Oh, stained soul! stained in your moral life by the world, or the flesh, or the Devil, flash the search-light of your Blessed Master's heroic and atoning sorrow into the crannies of your conscience here and now. He loves you; He will help you. He will cleanse by His grace and strengthen through His Passion.

“Be good, be good, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things—don't dream them—all day long;
And so (it may be very hard, but it is possible)
And so (it may be very long, but He will help)
And so make life, death, and that vast 'forever,'
One grand, sweet song.”

So may God help you.

SERMON XIII.

Philanthropy.

“Behold the man.”—ST. JOHN xix. 5.

WE have endeavoured to examine certain districts of human experience under the lights and shadows of the Passion. We have contended that there are thoughts which ought always to govern us in this relation, and which must not be forgotten. We have contended that whilst God is very near to every one of us in *fact*, He is often very far in *thought*. We have remembered that it is the contention of the Christian Church that that difficulty is got over, and can only be got over, by the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. And then we have dwelt upon the fact of supreme importance—that we only see God brought near to us for practical purpose, and in the closeness of His care for us, when Christ on the Cross exhibited the power of Love and Death. And if that foundation be a solid foundation—as we Christians believe—then, surely, my brothers, to view any district of human experience under the light or shadow of the Passion, is to view it in a way in which, to say the least, we may learn something of importance.

We have remembered under that light, one expression of human energy: we have remembered work. We have—I will not say travelled through, but I may

say, touched another district of experience under the same illumination. We have remembered something that has been taught by the suffering of our Master of the complex eternal relation of the creatures, which we call Society. And then we remembered that not only does man express his energy on material things or on ideal objects; not only does he meet and touch his fellow in the complex relations of ordinary daily life; not only is he subject to the forces of law, and liberty, and conscience, and the passions; not only is he the victim of grave temptations; not only has he, in fact, the moral life, all which we have dwelt upon—but we may touch another district of experience and see it in the same way.

We have ventured to think that sometimes that light is like a beacon fire, sometimes like a search-light. May we not carry the simile further, and remember that sometimes it is like the soft moonlight, which is, in one way, all the more true just because, like the genius of Turner, it does not concern itself with details, but it takes the broad aspect of things and gives them a life and beauty all their own?

Now, that kind of light of the Passion touches the district of experience we might glance at here and now.

My brothers, we may deal with man as a fellow-worker, we may deal with man as he appears from what he possesses of reputation, or place, or name, we may deal with him as a member of society. We may deal with man as an object of close affection, or an object which arouses impure and degraded passion; or, we may do one thing more—we may remember that there is one prominent object of human interest—man as man. We may remember that besides work, society, morality,

there is that large district, which is illuminated by the moonlight of the Passion—the district of Philanthropy. “Behold the man!”

The question was asked by David—it was asked not improbably when he was a shepherd boy on the hills of Bethlehem, “What is man?” We know that, for a moment, his imagination, as he gazed steadily at the stately pageantry of the heavens, led him to think lightly of the greatness of man; but certainly that creature to whom God gives such powers of imagination and speculation, be he what he may in his smallness, is greater than the heavens, however extensive, which *he* can contemplate, while *they* cannot contemplate him.

What is man? There is a familiar answer; it is the experience of all. Man is an animal. He is an animal marked by habits he forms. He is an animal marked by forces which affect him. He is an animal marked by the material impulse and instinct which sway him so often, in spite of all his highest aspirations. He is an animal marked by his liability to disease; and, alas! we are too sadly aware of it—he is an animal subject to death, to the swift corruption of the grave. Yes! but above all things, if he is *only* an animal, he is the animal most suffering of all; for, at least, he can contemplate his sufferings, and can forecast his destiny. And yet for many an age men went on with their ordinary works and pleasures, and saw the sufferings, and made little attempt to relieve them. But there came a day when the Representative Man, clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, with hands tied, with body lacerated, woke up in creatures around Him a new and powerful principle. And whenever we gaze at the *Ecce Homo*, we remember that the Passion

has sanctified and glorified corporeal works of mercy; that if nothing else is borne in upon us by the sufferings of Jesus, at least, my brothers, pity is borne in—pity which will refuse to forget the tremendous trials of that mysterious animal to whose class each one of us belongs.

Behold the man! And, as you behold him, remember what happened in a way in which it never happened before, but has often happened since the days of the Passion. Have you ever studied that splendid series of pictures to be found as stations of the Cross in the Cathedral of Antwerp? Have you ever seen that most realistic, but most touching expression of the little boy, the little Rufus, the son of the Cyrenian, when he buries his face on his brother Alexander's shoulder, unable any longer to watch Jesus goaded to His death? Well, if you have, you have there a vivid image brought home by the excellency of very real artistic genius of the birthday of human pity, when the Man of men submitted to unexampled suffering.

If you listen to no other word coming unspoken from the Cross, at least bear in mind that life is not wasted for you, if, under the soft light of Jesus' sufferings, you remember the tenderness and the power of pity.

But man is more than an animal. "Man," says the religious teacher, "is a spirit." Though prisoned in the body, he is, in thought, out-travelling the stars; he smiles with delight; he is not wearied with that journey; he does not fall, or faint, or fail; we cannot doubt, indeed, that his career so bright, so swift, is nowise ended in the grave. And when man—the sorrow-laden spirit—is seen under the light of the suffering

of his Divine Representative, well, then, my brothers, one danger is conquered and one spirit is ensured. The grievous danger that besets us intellectually or morally in the highest departments of civilized life, is the danger of cynicism, the failure in belief in goodness, the imagination that every man has his price, a settled certainty that we had better do the best for ourselves, and let the rest take care of themselves. That is the theory of the cynic. It forgets man as man, and it degrades his soul who adopts it. Behold the man!

Behold that lofty spirit under that bodily suffering, and remember that one message He left behind Him is, "Make a thousand mistakes, if so it be, be taken in a million times, if so it fall out; but whatever you do, do not lose trust in humanity, for, base and bad as it may be, it is capable of exaltation in and through Jesus Christ—pity and trust."

My brothers, one thing more. Behold the man! Man, to go back to the old and religious definition, is not only an animal and a spirit; he is a fallen creature. We know it. We know it by the exceeding ease of doing wrong; we know it by the too thorough sense of the difficulty of doing right; we know it by the sway of the world, and the despotism of evil desires, and the attractions of the Devil. Behold *the* man. Once, only once, but certainly once, there was one man who was not fallen. Tied by His hands, bleeding at His brow, torn by the scourge, still speaking the truth, enduring injustice, He reminded us all of two things, which we must never forget—that for fallen man, if repentant, there is from Him forgiveness, *and* for all of us there is hope. And you going out into life under the soft light of the sufferings of Jesus may remember—may you

not?—just these two classes of truths, which make the district of philanthropy a real thing from the light of the Lord.

First, don't forget that once upon a time it was possible in Rome for noblemen and highly cultivated women to sit and watch the gladiatorial shows; that once upon a time it was possible *for women* to turn the thumb down, and condemn to death the struggling gladiator. Remember that near the old harbour of Syracuse there is one of the great quarries which bears an historical reputation. To-day the roses and the wild flowers, and the eglantine, and the ivy, go struggling up those polished walls, and the sunshine of Sicily, and the wide blue sky, make a contrast and a brilliancy against the cream colour of its exquisite marble. And you may wander there by moonlight, or you may walk by daylight, and you will find it sunny, and happy, and beautiful, and calm. But you have to recall the fact once upon a time the quiet evening's amusement of the Syracusan ladies was to saunter round that quarry, and look down on the summer evenings to see the Athenians die.

That was. That is not. That never can be again. There are bad things in philosophy, there are wild passions in men that it is difficult to conquer; but there has been a world opened up of kindness of thought, kindness of word, kindness of deed; there has been a world opened up in which we have the privilege to act, the world of self-surrender for the sake of making human life just one whit more bearable. And it is due—oh! do not forget it—it is due to that awful, that compelling picture, the *Ecce Homo*. Behold the Man!

And then there is a third truth which we learn from

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this, that philanthropy is a real and Christian exercise developed by the Cross of Christ. It has been well said that in the old days there was humanity, but there was not philanthropy. There was spasmodic kindness, but there was not steady effort. My brothers, the figure of the Suffering One reminds us of this, it reminds us that philanthropy has learnt to be *real* since Christ died. You cannot help men by millions; you cannot carry multitudes of souls into happiness by mere sensational undertakings, by mere movements often meaning mere talk; but in your own narrow sphere you can make lives brighter and better. You can help, at least, one soul, and if you have done *that* you may say to yourself, thinking of him you are helping, "Behold the man." It is real, it deals with men individually, and thus with principle on principle it enriches life. Why should any man or woman in London be idle? why should the lady at the West End; why should the young man in the centre of the City, in vacant moments, find nothing to do? Are there no bodies to make less full of pain, or less wasted with hunger? are there no poor people to read to on week nights, or little children to teach on Sunday, or ragged boys to help to enjoy innocent delights of living and to leave what is bad? Why should any one be idle? "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

We remembered before, that morality, illuminated by the Passion, led us naturally to the pre-eminent science of goodness. Let us, then, remember this, that under the soft light of the *Ecce Homo*, the view of our Master, robed and suffering, and yet teaching, leads us to the real view of what life is. Some of you—nay,

all of you—will join with me in saying, life is a great opportunity. Some of you will say an opportunity for pleasure, some will say an opportunity for intellectual activity, and some will say an opportunity for the exercise of the muscles and the nerves. My brothers, I don't quarrel with any one of these definitions—except that they are incomplete. Life is a great opportunity, but life is short, and death is coming; the hours are counted up, they are done and gone; but they leave their consequences behind. But, mark; life, under the soft light of the *Ecce Homo*, is a great opportunity for one thing—for love in the heart, which means, translated into action, self-denial and service.

For service? Yes, for service! Mark, an opportunity for serving, on a great scale or a small scale; the one soul, or a crowd, or a multitude; or, in special private ways, the lonely unseen mother, or the heart-broken father, or the dying creature in the hospital, or the mistaken wandering miserable outcast. It is a chance, a great and splendid chance for remembering and acting upon the dignity of man as man, the greatness of philanthropy as taught by the Passion, and the glory of service while life lasts.

You will never find it lonely! You will never find it dark! You may have your dark hours, but your sunlight will be bright and so clear; flashes of lightning will make the darkness fade if you make up your minds, not in sensational enthusiasm, not only by big or worldly schemes, but in view of the *Ecce Homo*, to work for your fellow men.

What can I do? you say; and I make answer, Do what you can. And then in the last great day, when all is finished, we shall realize more perfectly that

wonderful truth that He, who is our Representative, allowed His vast force of reason and truth to overflow into the affections, and that, overflowing there, it changed humanity. Then, my brothers, we may be confident that, though our work be hidden and small, and unpretending, there will be a voice, like the voice from the Cross, which commended love and duty, saying unto us, "He that hath done it unto one of the least of these, hath done—yes, hath done—it unto Me."

SERMON XIV.

Religion.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord."—
GAL. vi. 14.

THIS, dear friends, is undoubtedly the expression of a very sublime and a very unique enthusiasm, but also of a real, a powerful, common sense. *If* Jesus Christ, *since* Jesus Christ, is God manifested in the flesh, then there can be no question, the moment we come to think of the matter seriously, the Cross is a marvellous phenomenon, and nothing can compare to it in the history of the world. The Cross, we have endeavoured to remember amongst other wonderful things, is a power of illumination. We have tried to watch certain districts of human experience, under the lights and shadows of the Cross. We have remembered that man expresses himself by an energy which touches material things, and so expressing himself, we have called that district *work*. We have remembered that his energy also has to do with the complex and yet, more or less, external relations which can only be described as *society*. We have not forgotten that man's energy is conditioned by his use of the forces of law and conscience, and the passions, and that out of that there comes *moral life*. And we remembered that man's energy shows itself in a district

extremely interesting, most important—his relation to his fellow-creatures, not according to their social status, but to man as man. We placed under the light of the Cross—sometimes feeling it to be a beacon fire, sometimes feeling it to be a search-light, sometimes thinking it was like soft beams of the moon—we have placed under this light, as well as we could, work, and society, and morality, and philanthropy. And we have found that in each of these districts which we must travel through, in the course of our mortal life, there is light from the Cross.

Now the question remains, Is there another district of interest? and is there light from Jesus Christ to make it plain? And I answer, There is. To the traveller in nearer Syria there is a striking effect of the constant change, not only of light and shadow, but a constant variation of the character of the landscape. Close to Beyrout there is a touch of the desert, a touch to remind one of the illimitable wastes of patient sand that separate him from the further East. Rising into the Lebanon, he is arrested by the sense of a certain Alpine dignity, only clothed with the flora, and toned with the colour of the East. On the lower slopes of those ~~home~~ely mountains, he finds himself on the broad plain and "the entering in of Hamath"—as the Bible calls it—where the Barada and the Pharpar are hurrying on to the sea. And on the upper mountains he is the victim of a scorching heat, and his feet are sore with the jagged rocks. But when he turns the point which marks the limit of his anti-Lebanon pilgrimage, he comes in face of a valley which has no compeer, no rival for beauty in the world. *There*, there are the remains of a world-old city; there the rivers flow together and interlace,

sometimes hand-in-hand, like friends that have joined conclusions in affection; sometimes at a distance, like friends that kissed their hands and parted to meet again. *There*, there are groves of oleanders, and *there*, there is a wonder of wild uncultivated roses. He finds, whatever other district he is travelling through in his pilgrimage, this at least is the most solemn as a city, and the most lovely as a garden; this—the world-old Damascus, like “the garden of God.”

Now, my brothers, consider the district of human experience to which I invite you, here and now.

Man's energy may be expressed on material things or in social relations, or in moral questions, or in philanthropic endeavours; but man, being immortal, has a power to express his energy on the highest of all facts, and on the most powerful of all persons. Well, the greatest, the most solemn, the most beautiful, the most certain, the most tremendous, and yet the most inviting district of our experience—dear friends, there is no question about it—is Religion. Religion is a district of man's experience, and the question for the moment and for practical purpose, is, Can that be really illuminated by the Cross?

Religion! Why, there are men who hold that all or that half the sorrows of the world would have been avoided if there had been no such thing as Religion. Religion! There are men who meet you—when you dare to speak with enthusiasm on such a district of human experience—with the scorn of the cynic, or the anger of the controversialist. Doubtless the Church has been torn; doubtless divergent opinions, like rugged rocks or piercing thorns, have made the path of Religion anything but easy; doubtless in the name of Religion, horrible

deeds have been done, but, when you come to stand beneath the Cross, there are one or two facts brought out by its illumination, which serve to commend Religion as something, to say the least of it, not to be despised. The Cross, we have seen, is the concentrated expression in act of those generalized teachings which come from the Son of Man. If so, these three things come out as to Religion from the fact of the Cross.

First, when we see the Man of men giving Himself up to death and sorrow, He reminds us that the most beautiful of the forms of human excellence can only find their really unflagging source and their really constant stimulus in power other than themselves. Now, what, among many, are the most beautiful forms of human excellence? Take three. First, there is humility, which at least teaches a man that truth, which it is so good for us to learn, teaches each of us his proper place. And if humility was never taught—as, in fact, it was not—as a virtue in the ancient world; and if humility, although it may be disregarded, is admired and acknowledged in the world of Christendom, tell me why? Why, because a man can never know his proper place, he can never be humble—that is, he can never be real—until he is constantly, and steadily, face to face with God, until he acknowledges Religion.

Take a second form. Take chastity. What form of excellence so perfectly lovely by what it shows without a taint upon it; by what it shows when there has been a taint and the taint is wiped away—what makes chastity so beautiful is—innocency. What makes the young man's life so lordly is his self-government. What can make a young girl so attractive as can purity? Or, look at the other side, What makes London a wilderness

and our streets a disgrace? Why, that which makes men strong and women beautiful is chastity, and that which makes the world a howling wilderness or a devastating fire, is the forgetfulness of that lordly form of excellence, viz. unchastity, unbridled, ungoverned desire. But where is that form of excellence to be found and supported? Certainly you don't find it in Roman philosophy, nor yet is it taught in the philosophy of Greece. But you *do* find it when the Virgin's Son came to suffer in His body and to show the dignity and the grace and the greatness of self-restraint. Henceforth He witnesses that—and, my brothers, I don't deny the difficulty—men and women are never thoroughly and finally chaste until they are constantly eye to eye with the pure God Who was offered as a sacrifice of the Passion; that is, until they are children of Religion.

Take a third form of human excellence, and see if it does not lead you to the same conclusion under the illumination of the Cross. Take charity. To deny one's self in brain, in heart, in nerves, in body, to give up one's time for others' use, to give up one's evenings for others' assistance—this, my brothers, was the creation of Christ Who gave Himself for us. And, giving Himself on the Cross, He reminds us, not only that God disciplines love by the natural relation of father and child; that God purifies love by the sanctified relation of lover and lover, of husband and wife; that God instructs love by the teaching of the Gospel; and that God explains love by the demand for philanthropy; but He goes further, and shows us that in the midst of this deep dark mystery the love of God was shown distinctly by the sacrifice of Christ, and, that

if men are to love, it must be face to face with the manifested self-sacrifice. In other words, He shows us the greatness of Religion by teaching us such lessons as that humility and chastity and charity must rest upon it if they are to live.

He makes Religion great also, because He shows us, in His own person, what the great teachers have maintained, that Religion is the passion of humanity. My friends, a passion is that which carries us, as a whirlwind carries away the *débris* of the fallen building before it, as the sea carries the beams and wreckage of the broken ship, or the sea-weeds uprooted by the storm, is the power which carries us energetically towards the object towards which it sets. Now, there are men who profess to hate God, and there are men who truly love God. But in all times, and everywhere—and more now, thank God, with all our sorrows—there is in mankind, in your heart and in mine, a longing for the living throb of the infinite heart; there is the passion which carries us to God, or something passing for God, something belonging to the other world. And when He came, the Representative Man, that passion showing itself in the life of faith, showing itself in the life of truth, showing itself in the overflowing of the rational nature into the powers of the human heart, that passion carried the Representative Man of our race, carried Him like a whirlwind or a rushing sea, carried Him to His death. And He reminds us, by being so borne on by that passion, that, do what you may, and say what you will, Religion is the passion of mankind.

Then there is one more light given upon this district of thought. By the Cross, we are not only reminded that Religion supports the virtues, not only reminded

that Religion is *the* passion of passions, but we are reminded that it is the strongest virtue that any man can possess.

Virtue, I submit, is manly strength, just as vice is feebleness. Now, the virtue of virtues is that firm and fearless and unchanging force which leads us to spend our energy thoughtfully and determinedly for God. Yes, that is Religion. And our Blessed Master, when He came to die, had, you remember, the quiet determination, the solemn dignity, the irremovable resolve, with which He set His face and marched to Jerusalem, like a man who was going to his business house, and who meant to carry out quietly, but strongly, the business in hand. And, when He did that, He reminded us that Religion is the strongest virtue and the most serious business of life. My brother, you want humility, you want chastity, you want charity. Still, beyond these, there is something within you calling you to a better country, for here, at least, most certainly you must die. My brothers, you want the power and force to enable you to do a work for the highest ends. Come what may, you want Religion!

Now, do not let us forget this, the one meaning of the light, yes, and the shadow of the Passion, viz. that it reminds us that beyond all districts of human experience and human effort, that one which must not be avoided, that one which must be explored, that one which should command your love, your attention, your reverence, is the district where human energy is spent on God's glory.

And then, most assuredly, there must be, and there will be, difficulties in the way. You find plenty of indifference in mankind, and that which is not indifference

but concerted determination to betray the hopes of humanity and to deny the highest things. That which our neighbours on the Continent call "the revolution," that which we call, in our homely phrase, literary invective or audacious godlessness. These things fight with your soul.

But more, when you approach Religion, illuminated by Christ, you must, speaking broadly, be aware that "the revolution," or the apostles of "the revolution," and among them many noisy teachers of modern times, attack three things. (1) They attack Holy Marriage. They forget that men—no, they don't forget, they remember—that men, if they are not in right relation with women, can never found that which is the school of so many virtues: a home. But if there is no dignity of happy and holy home life, there is no basis for society; if there is no basis for society, there is no strength for empire; if there is no strength for empire, there is no power for concerted action for goodness and God. They attack marriage; and the Crucified loved His Church and gave Himself for it; and this great Apostle, therefore, says, "Therefore husbands love your wives." And the Crucified said that marriage was indissoluble, except under one condition, which does not come into the divisions that are recognized by the modern divorce courts. Revolution and unbelief attack marriage, and you can only meet them by Religion and the Cross.

(2) Be sure of this also, they attack education. Not only must a child be born under the Divine sanction, but if he is to be the true child of undying and suffering love, he must be educated in the Christian Faith. The source of irreligion so rampant now, even among so-called Christians, is the attack on education.

(3) And, again, they attack worship. Not only must a child be born under the sacred sanction of marriage, and educated in the thought of another world, but he must be taught that when all empires have dwindled and died, when such a great empire as ours remains only a record of history, when what has been will only live in our imaginations, shadowy like the thin consistency of a dream, there is one Empire which never can die—the Church of Christ; and that the important thing for the creature is to be a wise member of that Empire, and to worship God.

But godlessness and “the revolution” are not only marked by their attack on public questions. My brothers, what is more important for us to remember is, they are marked by their attacks nearer home. Do not forget, when you find your prayers are flagging, when you cease to commend yourself at night to God, and the first thing in the morning to offer Him your work, when you deride or neglect your Sacraments, when you are thoughtless about close communion with God in Christ, not remembering His presence and walking as in His sight, when you are persuaded to imagine that sin does not matter, and that penitence is troublesome or unnecessary, do not forget, then, that you are acting unwisely as to the greatest of all things, the most awful and the most seriously personal thing in the world. You are forgetting what every man may well take trouble to live for, that for which any of us may be content to die, the highest passion of the Creature, the noblest foundation of the noblest forms of excellence, the strongest virtue placed at our disposal, you are forgetting Religion as witnessed to by the Cross of Christ. There is one fact in the world deserving meditation,

beyond all facts—the death of Christ. There is one Object for reverence alone beyond all objects—the living God. There is one force beyond all forces which comes straight from the heart, from the bleeding heart of Christ—repentance, forgiveness. Have you done wrong? Give it up. Go back. Retrace your steps. Turn aside from evil. Whatever else you do or do not do, be repentant, and get back to Christ. There is one effort worth your making—prayer. There is one gift that Christ has given, and you should rejoice in it habitually—the Sacrament of His own undying love, to give you strength for Religion.

And then, then, change upon change, life goes on. Since last I was allowed to speak in this pulpit, you have lost—England has lost—two such men as are only given by God's goodness and mercy now and again within half a dozen centuries to a struggling Church. Life goes on, and change is upon you! No more can you hear from this pulpit, no more can we hear in private talk, that sweet clear voice expressive of that acute, exact, and solid intellect, and, deeper down, expressing that fiery heart. No more! Life goes on, and change comes with it. No more can we ever listen to the greatest orator, as well as one of the greatest Christians, of modern times. He is gone. No more, although good men and true are left to minister to you, no more can the incisive intellect and the balanced judgment and the honest view and the strong determination of the great teacher, who presided here, be with us to guide us. Life goes on and passes, but death does not pass. Death comes, ready for each one of us.

“Twilight and evening bell!
And after that the dark,

And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

“For though from out this bourne of time and space,
The tide may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.”

Life goes, death comes. One thing stands. It stands in the midst of this working world; it stands amidst the confused noise of things; it stands for the poor man in his lonely cottage, for the working servant in the commercial house, for the footman in the great family, for the daily governess at her daily toil, for the over-tired clergyman, for the hardwrought layman. There is that which never fails us, and that is *Religion*—the energetic real sense of close communion between the soul and God. And there is one witness to its greatness—make it your own.

O dome and walls of this Cathedral, again and again re-echoing voices greater, stronger, clearer, more powerful as witnesses than mine! O dome and walls of this Cathedral, to one thing ye witness as emblems of the great things to which ye are dedicated. Above you all *stat crux dum volvitur orbis*—whatever greatness and blessedness in this life! All is crowned—it is crowned with the Cross. Greatness of character, support of sorrow, profundity of penitence, sincere hatred for sin, and a manly heart that will do and work and suffer in all districts of human experience,—they are due to that which, I beseech you, place above your life as its motto, its restraint, its consolation, that which marked you in Baptism, that which will help you in death, that which will put a shadow of sweetness or shine as in sunlight on your grave, that which will bring you at last, if you



SERMON XV.

Lessons of the Resurrection.

"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day."—1 COR. xv. 3, 4.

IN every life there must be something to fall back upon. Life, for any who think, is far too wide, too strange, too serious a business to find itself in any measure satisfactory without definite support. We reach a point at last, where—whatever our theory of life be—we need a strong foundation on which to base it all, a real rock on which we may stand.

For those who seriously accept the Christian religion as the solution of many problems, that rock, that foundation, is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we dwell on some lessons given by the Church in the course of her ordinary teaching; if we meditate on some of the leading thoughts of the Perfect Life, sooner or later we must fall back upon this. Christian philosophy, or stray lessons of Christian morality may, indeed, and to real purpose, haunt the chambers of men's minds when they have long abandoned belief in the great truths of Christian history; but no serious believer, who attempts to make the Christian view of life his own, can long dispense with the solemn and powerful facts on which it

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must ultimately rest. This was unquestionably the view of St. Paul, and—though he recurs to it again and again—nowhere is he more emphatic on the point than in this Epistle.

I.

Here, then, in the course of examining some of the leading thoughts of Christian life, character, and duty, we are carried back to Easter Day. The regular Epistle for the Sunday breaks in upon us with a reminder of the need of always falling back on fundamental questions. If we ask ourselves at any time, when the mind is staggered by conflicting theories, and confused by the cross currents of semi-civilized or semi-religious thought, why, as a matter of common sense merely, I cling to Christianity and all its teachings—the *external* answer, so to speak, is, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. If He did not, the thing is over, and, with whatever regrets, we must part company with it; if He did, the teaching of His Church as to life and conduct has upon it the seal of an infallible testimony.

Here, then, we are arrested, dear friends, by a question of *fact*. As to this fact, there was, of course, in the Apostolic mind, no doubt whatever. It has been constantly noticed by Christian apologists, that the early preaching and teaching in the New Testament may be justly described as a witness to the Resurrection. Whatever doctrine was dwelt upon, this fact was constantly cropping up. Nothing else so held the attention, and filled the minds of the first Christians. Nothing else seemed half so important to the early Church.

It had, as we know, been boldly asserted in Jerusalem,

and to some who had been mixed up with the matters relating to the death and burial of Jesus Christ, some six or seven weeks after the event, and in the very place where it was alleged to have happened. In the affair of the cruel, judicial murder of Jesus of Nazareth a great many persons had been, for one reason or another, intensely interested. They had every opportunity of sifting the statements of the early witnesses, and were practically challenged to do so, and there was no approach to disproof. Some five times on the first Easter Day had the risen Jesus appeared to one or another, to two or three, or a group, or a number of His disciples. For forty days afterwards He was "going in and out" among them, and seen and spoken to by many under varying circumstances. The Christian testimony had been in no way shaken. Men had died as martyrs in perfect reliance upon the truth of the fact, and, resting upon that truth, the great movement of Christianity was marching on.

And now, some six and twenty years afterwards, St. Paul speaks of some half, or rather more than half, of an immense body of witnesses to whom the risen Lord had appeared, being still alive. Five hundred persons at once cannot all be the victims of a delusion! To those still living of that group alone, St. Paul boldly refers his readers. It was no old story, then, with all the witnesses dead. The major part was alive.

And where is he making such statements? Why, in pleasure-loving, sensual, incredulous Corinth. Nowhere could his assertions come with a greater shock of surprise than there. They had no conception of a real rising from the dead, of a real other world. Dim and fantastic notions had flitted across the Greek mind on

the subject of a future life, but they *were* dim and fantastic, they had no true and definite shape, and no practical bearing on life, and here came St. Paul with his simplicity and confidence of assertion, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day."

St. Paul is careful to say that all this he also had "received." He was always emphatic as to the fact that the revelations of truth which came to him were not "of man nor by man," but direct from God. In this way he had been instructed in the mystery of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. In this way he had learnt, from the Head of the Church Himself, the fact and bearing of the Resurrection. He is careful to note how all this fell in with Scripture; how what had come about, God had in fact foretold. He felt, as much as any Christian teacher, that the character and work of the Master bore witness to the Resurrection, even as the Resurrection bore witness to that work and character. He, as the others, felt the mystery and awfulness of life; the unique position of Him Who was Lord of life; the impossibility that, in the long run, the chains of death could bind Him Who was life itself; but he was deeply impressed, and here he is impressing the Corinthians, and with them us who read, with the certainty and vigour of the fact.

For, after all, there is a majesty in *fact*.

The clouds and sunlight sweep across the hills; sometimes the peaks are glorious with changing lights; sometimes gray with mists and shadows; sometimes the wild storm drives across them; sometimes they

“ . . . frown in robes of gloom,
Or smile in robes of gold.”

Still, after all, the *fact* of the mighty mountains remains—secure, changeless, full of meaning. The ocean is sometimes enveloped in mist, sometimes swept with unresting wind, sometimes dancing in changing sunlight. It has many aspects and many changes; but there it is, under all the changes, a great mighty fact.

You come from a busy, restless world. You cross yon sacred threshold, and around you is felt the power of sacred association, a thousand years of religious services, in the fact of your noble Cathedral. Amidst all the instability of life, amidst the changeful moods of human nature, the dark questions, the perplexing problems of life, the mind falls back with a sense of repose on the *fact* of the Resurrection. “He rose again the third day.”

II.

But the fact of the Resurrection is important because of its *consequences*.

Of these there are some with which we are now specially concerned, viz. the spiritual consequences in the Perfect Life. There are, indeed, consequences plainly revealed to us, which connect themselves directly with the Resurrection, and are found in the supernatural condition of the Christian soul; such are our regeneration in Holy Baptism, our new creation by the Holy Spirit of God into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. But I do not mean these, but the consequences to us in our own tone of mind and thought, both in and towards ourselves and towards others.

Towards ourselves there is a tone of mind altogether Christian. Whatever difficulties have been raised at any time as to the revealed fact and method of redemption, there is a very deep-seated sense in the human heart, sooner or later, of the need of it. It is easy indeed to dwell upon the various insoluble mysteries which surround the Christian revelation ; but it is also easy and reasonable to point out that, in our present state of clouded limitation, we can scarcely be "bound or invited to clear the present dispensation under which we live, of all the moral anomalies, disparities, and apparent contradictions lying around us." We may not be able to explain precisely *why* redemption should be wrought out in the way in which it has, and yet we may have—and at some time or other most men do have—a sense of need of it. Take home, then, even in such small degree as, too often, we are capable of, the revelation of the text, and your Christian soul must have the deep feeling, as regards yourself, that you are a *redeemed* creature.

We know well what a difference love makes in life. The most hard-worked and most cloudy life is an altogether different thing when we have the consciousness that we are loved by those we love. The very thought of the wife, the child, the sweetheart, the friend—even though separated from us by long leagues of distance, or hidden from us by some necessary and cruel barriers of time—is a stimulus and a consolation to a true and pure heart. To act and endure under the consciousness of an unflagging affection is to do and bear in a spirit and temper entirely different from that which accompanies only stern determination. Think, then, what the power is on the human heart of the moving sense of being loved to the extent of Redemption.

The human heart then asks no solution of all the antecedent problems. However redemption came about, or was necessary—it *has* come about, and is all-powerful. “Loved me, gave Himself for me,” becomes a fruitful fact. The soul has a sense of harmony and joy, a sense of confidence and exhilarating delight in—notwithstanding its sense of sin—its consciousness of being loved, of acting, enduring, moving on among the trials of life under the tender smile of its Redeemer. For, to the awakened conscience the sense of sin is a very real thing, but equally real and strongly supporting is the further sense that sin can be cancelled, that the soul has been redeemed, and at so great a price.

This sense of Redemption, this love of the Atonement, may affect you, my brother, my sister in Christ, in many ways. It helps you to govern your thoughts. The soul feels itself far too valuable, far too sacred, to allow the untrammelled wilfulness of undisciplined thought. We fancy that we cannot rule our thoughts, we even fancy that we cannot govern our affections. Baseless fancies. Affections become deeper, nobler, stronger; thoughts become richer, wiser, more powerful and more pure where the will, which *can* regulate and restrain them, is stimulated to true action by the sense of redemption, by the sense of the love towards it of Jesus Christ.

It is a motive power like this which really touches every department of our being. It gives dignity and generosity to our treatment of others, making our world of feeling at once deeper and more wisely controlled. It adds reality and perseverance to the solemn exercises of prayer. “O cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee.” “Thy mercies, Lord, are great; Thou wilt never fail them that trust Thee.” “Be strong, and

He shall comfort your heart, all ye that put your trust in the Lord." All the intense expressions of confidence in God, all the earnest advices to a deeper exercise of trust in Him : how vastly these are enhanced, far beyond what the Psalmist could have realized, by the sense of being the darling object of redeeming love, by the revelation of the Apostle. "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day."

III.

But, further, the belief in the realizing of such a truth gives a further sense towards ourselves, which is of the highest spiritual importance. We are, indeed, so used to the Apostolic statements as to immortality, that we can have little idea of the keenness and vividness of truths as to another world, which was felt by the early converts to the Christian Church. St. Paul himself, with his intense nature and his special gifts of Divine illumination, felt this with unexampled force. That "the Mighty God," the Redeemer, should also, and now for always, be Man ; that He—man as He is—should break the power of death which has held the race in its terrific thralldom far too long, made him feel, as perhaps no man had felt before, what a vast charge had passed before the human family and human prospects by the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord. The strong feeling which possessed him he passed on, in a measure, to others. *Then* it was felt with keenness ; *now* we may be more blunted by the habit of having heard it from our earliest days ; still, for every Christian who, in any measure, wakens up to the facts of life and of religion,

one consequence for his own soul from this striking Easter story, is the sense of possessing a Future.

The heart, indeed—the human heart—in most things does not speculate; it looks forward. As the night closes in, and there is darkness and storm on the wild sad sea, the sailor looks forward to the breaking of the dawn. When friends are parted from us, and there is no help for it but resignation, the loving heart, with whatever sorrows, looks forward with hope to meeting again. In a passing life like ours, it has made a greater difference than can well be imagined in the whole temper of human action—the power of looking forward, of being placed in possession of a Future. It is as if the leader of our race had explored the unknown world and revealed to us all that it is well for us to know here and now, and taught us how to prepare for a Blessed Immortality.

It is, alas! possible for us to put this aside. We may swim with the stream and drift with the current. We may choose as our only portion that which we see. We may content ourselves with this and take no further trouble, and ask no further questions. To this there are plenty of temptations. Part of our trial is that all things seem to go on in a regular service, and with unvarying precision. We use general expressions, such as Nature, such as Time, such as the Present, to express the sense of the most usual experiences, and we have an almost natural way of thinking of these as continuing for ever. But, however long *they* may go on as they are, that is not our condition.

“He fixed thee ’mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would’st fain assert:

Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee, and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

“What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim
Such things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

“Look not thou down, but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp’s flash and trumpet’s peal,
The new wine’s foaming flow,
The Master’s lips aglow!
Thou, heaven’s consummate cup, what need’st thou with earth’s
wheel?”

Yes, we are here to form a character. The things of this life are not to be spoken of in a morbid way, or depreciated with unreal exaggeration. They are God’s good gifts. They are of intense and ever-increasing interest—but they will pass. We shall remain, and remain with that character which we have had formed by our mode of using the things, the gifts, the joys, the trials of this passing state. However great and wonderful the gifts of time, and the results of an advancing civilization, still the Christian knows they must go, and that which is of infinitely greater interest and importance must remain—the character, I repeat, which we have formed this side the grave.

It may be hard, and we all know for fallen man it often is hard, to “use the world as not abusing it.” It may be hard, but for us it is possible. And to this we are assisted by an ever-deepening sense of the possession of a Future. Indeed, man’s capacity for greatness and goodness may be measured by his power of living in

this sense, of throwing himself into the future. This sense has been greatly enlarged in us by our Blessed Master. It may be in our own souls a consequence of the wonderful revelation of the text, "I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day."

IV.

And then there are consequences towards others which come from this Easter revelation.

We sometimes are startled by the exhortations of Holy Scripture, and certainly of the Apostles, as to the duty of a high view of others. "Honour all men," "Let each esteem others better than himself," and so on, seem to be extravagances, considering the vast picture of human sin and folly and selfishness constantly unfolded before us in human life. The Christian has power to find man in Christ, and to look ever at the possible Christ in the man. "That block of marble," once said Michael Angelo, "contains an imprisoned angel, and I am about to release him." To bring out the Christ in the man is part of the office of the Christian. Every soul in Christendom, since Christ came and lived and died and rose again, has much that is good. Sometimes if we open our eyes to see, we are astonished by unexpected excellences. Characters, it has been said, if wanting in some one trait of beauty, are sure to be gifted with another; and, amidst the many and disheartening disappointments in life, a follower of Christ is consoled by remembering of each, or any, that—since the great

fact involved in the Resurrection—they each may be perfected in Christ.

For that God shall ultimately triumph over evil, no follower of the risen Jesus can doubt for a moment. We may well, my brethren, take heart and courage for ourselves, as for others, in this thought. We may well look up and hope and try again amidst our own failures; and for others, test every effort with a heart from which fear and despondency are banished, seeing that *we* are the children, the disciples of Him Who died, and was buried and rose again the third day.

V.

But broadly there is, I would have you think, a deep and searching Spiritual lesson here, which needs to be learnt in the Christian life. There are few things so saddening to man on earth as the sense of failure. In one sense, indeed, it is usefully humiliating. We are apt, too apt, to trust in ourselves until we find how entirely all things come from God. Moods come and go. There are moments when things appear with at least a touch of sunlight; and again, there are those when all seems one blank failure. The sad marks of mutability and unrest are on all. St. Paul himself, with his strong and buoyant faith, with his ever-springing hope, and the unflagging love to Christ which always supported and stimulated him, had his moments of depression. It has been remarked that in the Philippian Epistle where, above all, he speaks in a voice of joy and thanksgiving, he also seems to hint at—for the moment, at least—a sense of failure.

We have to learn—and the lesson is often bitter in

the learning—that God has always called us to labour, but not necessarily to success. Indeed, there are low successes compared with which, infinitely better, are “high failures.” The politician who sacrifices principles, and deceives and corrupts to win the votes of a thoughtless electorate, gains indeed a low success. The poet who uses his Divine art to recommend thoughts and theories opposed to truth and nobility of principle, may attract where he ought to reprove, and gains a low success. The manœuvring mother, who marries her daughter to money or position, irrespective of character, indifferent to heart, gains a low success. The novelist who makes a great name by dealing with subjects which should lie in the shelter of shadow, who injures the purity, the advance, the happiness of souls, may gain a low success.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as high failure. Rather, what appears failure for the moment, when nobly conceived and bravely done, has in it the germ of a far-off, indeed, but real victory.

“ I do not blame
Phœbus or Nature which has set this bar
Betwixt success and failure, for I know
How far high failure overleaps the bounds
Of low successes. Only suffering draws
The inner heart of song and can elicit
The perfumes of the soul. ’Twere not enough
To fail, for that were happiness to him
Who ever upward looks with reverent eye
And seeks but to admire.”

“ Not only those
Who hold clear echoes of the voice divine
Are honourable,—they are blest indeed,
Whate’er the world has held—but those who hear
Some fair faint echoes, though the crowd be deaf,
And see the white god’s garments on the hills,

Which the crowd sees not, though they may not find
Fit music for their visions ; they are
Not pitiable."

"More it is than ease,
Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,
To have seen white presences upon the hills,
To have heard the voices of Eternal God."

The faithful effort from a noble motive is never really lost.

God, it is true, fulfils Himself in many ways, but the Christian cannot forget that the greatest of all achievements appeared at first an irretrievable disaster. He cannot forget that if "Christ died for our sins and was buried," He also rose again the third day.

Therefore, may He give us grace to have noble thoughts, high aims, steady effort and persevering courage. May He teach us the lesson to—

"Never turn our backs, but march breast forward,
Never doubt that clouds will break ;
Never dream, though right is worsted, wrong will triumph ;
Hold, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

SERMON XVI.

The Immortality of the Soul.

"Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."—2 TIM. i. 10.

THE main thoughts of a Christian life hinge upon the reality of another world. People may, if they please, sneer at the "other worldliness" of the Church's teaching, but still it remains true, that *if* this life is the vestibule of another, *if* for another it is a school and a training, common sense and religious feeling lead us to dwell with the deepest earnestness upon that other. If, on the other hand, the conscious being closes his career with the grave, then Christians are "of all men most miserable," then ordinary wisdom would lead us to make the most of what we have, and to give up dreaming of that which can never be ours. In other words, vitally connected with Religion, is the question of the immortality of man.

I.

It seems to me to be vain to deny that the whole tradition and feeling of the Christian Church has ever been to take for granted—for better for worse—the natural immortality of man. In more recent times, however, there have emerged various theories on the

subject which are based on a rejection of this conclusion. Some of these, or most of them, have been framed with a view to lightening the apparent weight of the severe words of Scripture on the subject of the punishment of impenitent sinners. On that subject I do not dwell now, but may turn to it another time. However, sometimes it is contended that there may be "survival" after death, but not necessarily, therefore, "immortality." This is too fine-spun a notion to hold men with a serious conviction. Anyhow, mankind generally understands what is meant by "immortality," viz.—not to introduce notions of Time, which will be no more, hereafter; but we have to use such phrases, considering the terms in which we, from our present limited experience, are almost obliged to speak—viz., I say, the continuous existence of the conscious soul in other states and in another world. That is, that when once a soul exists, it never ceases to be.

This is certainly the sense in which immortality has been understood by the Church as the interpreter of Holy Scripture, and—if we are to take Scripture as our guide, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that it is in this sense we are to understand "immortality."

A great reverent Christian thinker, indeed, seems to think that if we are guided by St. Paul, we shall not readily believe the natural Immortality of the Soul to be a part of Christian Religion as taught in the Gospel. With this I find myself unable to agree (1) because, were it so, the general tradition and feeling of the Church could hardly be what it is, if the Church be Divinely guided, as she is, in interpreting Holy Scripture; and (2) because such words as those of the text seem to point to an opposite conclusion. Here our Lord is

represented, not as creating immortality for saved souls alone, but as, by the fuller light He has brought to us on the destiny of man, making the *fact* of immortality clearly known to us.

Then by some it has been held that our life literally ends with the grave—that is the view of Materialism; and by others, that it ends for “the lost” after the Last Judgment, which seems to be annihilationism, properly so called; that is, in fact, ends by a gradual atrophy as the punishment of “the lost,” and the necessary consequence of sin. It may help us, then, in our views of the Unseen, and our consequent conduct, if we consider some of those evidences of, or presumptions in favour of, immortality, which come to us from the teachings of great men and the witness of the Holy Scripture.

II.

Materialism, then, and what is called “conditional immortality,” are the two chief theories opposed to the wide belief of mankind and the Church.

Now (1) it is worth remembering that man is conscious of *himself*, of his *personal self*. His gifts and powers centre round an *Ego*, whose chief manifestations are conscious thought and free will. This world of mind and soul has indeed its roots in a sensuous organism, but *besides* that organism man is conscious of *himself*. As an animal he is, like all animals, aware of sensations, impulses, and feelings, but by thought and conscience he soars above animal life, and is partaker of what is Divine. Some contend that one part of our immortality is not natural (*i.e.* immortality of the body), but is a “gift flowing from the Incarnation,” and it is

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suggested that it is unlikely that one part should be natural, and the other a gift of the Christian system, and that thus our immortality would be "divided." Granted for a moment the premiss, we may demur to the conclusion. Man is body and soul. But the two parts are of very unequal value—if so we may speak—at least if the New Testament is to be believed. The one is akin to the animal world, the other to Divine life. The "divided immortality" would then not be so gravely improbable, if maintained; however, of the body we must speak another time. But this self-consciousness of man is deeply suggestive of the immortality of the soul. He is ever living in the past. He gathers up numberless memories and makes them living presences. He can suddenly fly back years and years and surround himself with objects long wrapped away in shrouds of distance from his view. He lives in the future. He forecasts and arranges for years which he may never see in his present condition, for eventualities in which, as he is now in this life, he may never play a part. So it is that the noblest and most thoughtful minds looked on into a world beyond the grave long before Christ had "brought immortality to light." These natural thoughts of a continuous life are at least a presumption in favour of its truth, even among those who predicted the Incarnation, and certainly shows how radically different from, and more noble than, material life is the spirit of man. It has been truly said, "it became familiar with the idea of perpetuated existence"—though all was still dim and uncertain—"beyond the grave."

It is to be remembered, too, that man's mind and spirit so constantly develops and advances with effort and exercise as years go on. Man may lose some parts

of his mortal frame, he may have to pass through much of life deprived of some member of the body forfeited by disease or accident, he may even be declining in general health towards the death of the body, yet— notwithstanding the fact that, at times, “the mortal body presses down the immortal spirit,” still frequently the mind becomes clearer, and the will and character calmer, stronger, more gentle, and more robust. Close as the link is, therefore, between the body and soul, great as is the dignity and importance of the body, such things drive us to feel the still greater importance of man’s spiritual nature, and the probability, to say the least, of the truth of its own premonitions, the truth of its natural immortality. Again, to quote my own words elsewhere, “It may also be doubted whether the human mind is really capable of conniving—certainly it is not capable of imagining—its own reduction to nothingness. In the indestructible sense of present *personal* life, there seems to be the whisper of an intuition that *that* personal life cannot be divided, or impaired, or reduced to nothing.” The indestructibility of the soul has even been felt to be a formidable argument, and it is no answer to it to say that indestructibility is an idea connected with material bodies existing in space, and that the idea of destructibility or division is wholly foreign to the idea of a soul, which, not being material, cannot be said to exist in space, for the mind is, after all, rooted in a material soil. Mysterious truths, the *full* range of which no mind can properly conceive, and which we are constantly driven to express in the most handy way in our power by the use of, properly speaking, material images, are yet truths. *The* important point is, that the human mind can conceive part of its body

being taken from it; but it cannot think of itself, and of its personal life other than as indivisible and one.

“Such considerations seem to make more vivid that wide-reaching force which may be called universal testimony and which is only explicable on the hypothesis that man has been gifted with an *intuitive* sense of immortality—more or less clear and active, according to his greater or less degree of fidelity to moral light and truth.” For universal testimony it may fairly be called. The thought of immortality has been present one way or another wherever man is.

“Here sits he, shaping wings to fly,
His heart forebodes a mystery,
He names the name—Eternity.”

Hindus, Confucians, American Indians, Maories, Ancient Egyptians, Scandinavians—all had a belief in a dim Eternity. The Greeks had some, though no very practical idea, of a shadowy beyond, rising to an indeed exceptional tone of certainty in “the incomparable death-scene of the Phædo.” The Romans, with a pathetic uncertainty, were haunted by the same intuition. Witness the sad and beautiful words at the close of the *Agricola* of Tacitus; witness the statements of Seneca, of Cicero.

In the ancient Scriptures, too, although men are still in a twilight world, the same is clear. “The primitive revelation to the early ancestors of the human family, the promise of the ‘seed of the woman’ to conquer evil, *involved* immortality.”

The patriarchs saw the same truth, though still dimly. Abraham, seeing it, rejoiced in a promise, which without it were a mockery; Jacob, learning it, passed

through life as a "stranger and pilgrim," seeking "a better country;" the Psalmists (implied it as they sang it) in innumerable songs of penitence and trial and praise; the Book of Job moves on the assumption, on the part of the chief figure in it, of the truth of unending life; Daniel among the prophets, foretells, in plain terms, a literal resurrection, "which implies his belief in immortality." Just as the intuition perceived by "every man that cometh unto the world" found its expression among the nations in guesses and speculations of more or less accuracy, according to the power and purity of the moral atmosphere around, so the revelation to ancient Israel was still *a revelation in twilight*, and altogether excluded a consideration of the depressing phenomena of the visible world, such as appeared in physical death and disease; but "was enough to leave a solemn sense, on pious minds, of another world." Nothing really, however, made this so certain as the revelation of man's relation to God. "The moral law taught him his dignity and his insufficiency;" the revelation of God in His Majestic unity brought to his mind vividly the fact of a Spiritual and Eternal world, with which, as he is beset, he may be led to a high aim and therefore to penitence, or he may rise in daring, but fear-inspiring rebellion before God, clinging to Him one way or another as his governing thought, his chief support, his most dreadful fear—and therefore with whom he could not but associate himself.

Our consciousness of our own personality, indivisible and always our own; our sense of the soul's power of development, our incapacity to conceive personal annihilation, our *intuitions*, the wide reach of these intuitions among mankind, the voices of the ancient

Scriptures, the implied and taught relation of man to God—all cry the life of the soul is inextinguishable. Still this may have been more or less in twilight, it remained for us to hear the certainty. We are immortals. "Immortality is brought to light" by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

III.

But the fact of immortality is brought home to us by considerations which are placed before us in the usual scientific and critical discussions of our time. It is worth our while to examine witnesses who are supposed, by a certain class of minds, to make immortality an improbable hypothesis, and see what they have to say. And first of all, comes the materialist with his view of the meaning of life and death.

The evidences of life, he reminds us, are seen in the body, but what is it, after all?—"a mechanical, chemical, electrical machine." It is a machine in which each organ has its proper function. In full health every organ performs its function smoothly and with regularity. Disease comes, the organs are weakened or deranged, and the functions, consequently, are poorly performed. Death comes, the strange and interesting supply of material substance which gathered round one centre, one self, prepares to disperse, for other uses round other centres, by the chemical action of the grave. The organ is broken and destroyed. What reason to suppose that the function does not end as well? Thought, or self, or soul, is a function of the brain. The brain passes to the dilapidation of decay; why has not thought or self ended with it? But *is* thought, or self, or soul,

a function of the brain? Nothing of the kind. Here is omitted *the fact of consciousness*. Scientific thinkers tell us the connection of consciousness with the motions of the brain is unthinkable. There is a chasm between the two. The molecular motions and discharge of the brain *and* consciousness are *coexisting* facts, belonging, according to science, to different worlds of phenomena; and worlds separated by an impassable chasm in thought.

The brain, then, in its physical action, cannot be considered as having these as a part of its function. Let a man cry to you, "Your child is well;" you are happy, satisfied. Let him say, "Your child is ill;" you are disturbed, overcome, and thrown into active excitement. Precisely the same number of waves of sound have struck the brain through the ear. What makes the difference? *Consciousness of the meaning* of the words; something that belongs to a world *not* material. The enormous difference is caused by thought alone. Mind is then, in itself, something independent of matter. The union of trains of thought with the state of the material brain is acknowledged to be a profound mystery; so it is, but the separation of one from the other, then, is in no way impossible, nor a bit more nor less mysterious. All the materialist can say is, that the material evidences of the action of the conscious soul have passed from our observation in death, but there is nothing to show that, *therefore*, that conscious soul has ceased to exist; on the contrary, our experience of dreams and of states of unconsciousness to the external world go to prove the reverse; and in death, all we can say is, that the really "living powers" of man pass from our immediate cognizance, by no means that they are destroyed. Materialism, when examined

carefully, brings us in full view of probable immortality.

Again, the same has been ably shown when the metaphysician is questioned. Men had imagined—it has been pointed out—that the very idea of a soul outlasting a body had grown up from a loving memory of the images of dead friends. But it has been forcibly answered that “if the belief in the permanence of life through death depended on the scenery of the memory and of sleep, it would hold no less of other perishable objects than of man.” But we do not imagine dead leaves really alive, though we are sure of the true existence of the dead friend.

The truth is, as we have remembered just now, man feels and knows his own *personality*. It is the centre of his life; the current of fleeting events and saddening change drives past him, but *he* remains. We are aware of the changeless in us—the *personal* being. We can only learn by beginning with ourselves, and so we ascribe to others what we *know* as the fundamental fact of our own being, and learn that each of them too, not *has*, but *is*, an immortal soul.

But, besides this, we may call as witness our intellect and our knowledge of intellect in man, our conscience and moral sense, and, above all, our heart. Is the human intellect evidently intended only for this short, passing life? If it is meant and fitted *only* for this life, higher culture is clearly waste of time. But we feel the more deeply we think, and the more we are astonished at the greatness of great intellects, that they *must* have been equipped for further and nobler ends. We do homage to intellect which, in its power and range, far transcends and surpasses the needs of the moment.

It has been truly said that, "when we think of Newton, it is not at the mint, but in his study; of Von Humboldt, not in the Geheimrath, but on the Andes; of La Place, not at the Ministry of the Interior, but in the Observatory, or at his desk."

How do we act as to time? What time is, it may be difficult to say. Is it a "phantom of succession," delusive, evanescent? Is it a mere mode of thought? Is it a fact, or a mere idea of relation to things? Anyhow, we find a practical meaning in this mysterious possession, and we know that we are creatures of time and sense, but are fast hurrying on to when time and sense shall be no more. Why? We act even now as if independent of time. We show our sense of our immortal structure. We throw ourselves back into history, and are keenly interested in those who have long passed away; we throw ourselves forward, and confront the possible with eager curiosity. Can we not be content with those who walk the path of life with us, and leave others before and behind alone? If all is over with some of them, and all will be over with others soon after our being here has closed, why waste ourselves? Why should literature exist? Mere folly and surplusage, if in the communing of thought with thought, the source of one is dried up and dead, and the other soon have to be! Common sense points to a belief in some sort of "proportion between endowment and achievement." Man overlaps time as it is given him in his short life. He has wide outlook over worlds and worlds, thus conquering space. If his intellect is only meant for this life, he is indeed cruelly over-endowed, for he carries with him and in him in his mental build, vast resources, clearly enough equal to infinitely wider

exercise than ever can be theirs in this world. Think of the undeveloped souls, the "mute inglorious mysteries," the stunted lives, the clear, yet unassaulted intellects. Mind itself cries out for immortality.

And how speaks conscience and our moral sense? Conscience, however we like to define it, or account for it, is an imperial power. It is even witnessing, somehow or other, that we are able, if we will, and that we ought, to turn from evil to good, from what is wrong to what is right, when the choice presents itself to us. We feel that behind it is an all-righteous authority. And if we have moral freedom, we are convinced that a difference must be made—from the nature of the case, between those who use and those who abuse it. There *must* be a final reckoning. It is well said, "Wherever conscience is, there we stand only in the fore-court of existence; and a moral world cannot be final unless it be everlasting." Indeed, we cannot look out on this world as it is, with any liveliness of moral sense, without feeling sure that here there is no room for entire justice, for redressing and readjusting the balance which human nature is sure to look for; and that if righteousness, if justice, be the true order of Divine government, then immortality is rightly expected by man.

Even stronger, dear friends, or, at least, even more closely coming home to us, is the witness of the heart. The play of the affections is the happiness of life. Love, real love, is the most moving, most supreme, most all-embracing of all powers. And how does it deal with absence? How with the most terrible of all absences, the absence of death? It is ever looking on, straining its eyes across that mysterious ocean, over which no voyager returns. Love is in its very nature a witness

to Eternity. Who ever said, what heart ever could say, to one loved, I will love you for one month, for six months, for a year? It postulates Eternity. It is the voice of the heart which demands *life*, which expects *life*, which cannot enter into the thought of death as a barrier. Its cry, its song is—

“ Oh! the joy, the joy of living!
Oh! the sweetness of breaking day!
Oh! the freshness of breezes at sun dawn!
Oh! the bloom and the scent of the May!

“ Oh! the joy, the joy of living!
Oh! the clearness of heaven above!
But *the* joy of which life has the giving
Is the rapture and gladness of Love!”

IV.

Such are some witnesses, emphatic and indestructible, from the very constitution of our being, to the fact of immortality. Many of these witnesses had been more or less heard by listening souls in the old world. But for us Christians beyond them all there is, of course, something more. St. Paul, though he could reason “of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” yet staked all his clear declarations of another life on one decisive fact. One man had promised to break the yoke of death, and he had kept his word. He had removed the old law of death by which all were bound. No longer need there be dim intimations of another world. Jesus Christ had, by the acts of His own doing, by the truths He proclaimed, brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel.

Brethren, let us remember our awful dignity. Matter

—so philosophers teach us—may change its form, but can never cease to be. Spirit—the gospel and the Church, as well as the intimation we have noted in ourselves, remind us—is not in this inferior to matter; it can never die. Born to immortality, let us feel the solemn sense of all such endowments. Let us remember that our destiny is placed in our own hands. Let us learn not merely to drift with the current of things, and close our ears to the sounds of the unseen, and our eyes to the light which come to us from another world. Let us by grace, the grace that comes from Christ, crown our Immortality with Eternal life.

SERMON XVII.

The Resurrection of the Body.

"He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory."—PHIL. iii. 21.

HERE are the exact words—in their meaning—of St. Paul. We have meditated upon various serious facts of the Christian life—its wide outlook, its concentrated expression, its spiritual attitude, from the fact of the Resurrection. We paused to remember the evidences from humanity, from the consensus of serious teachers, from the witness of scientific acknowledgment, as well as from Holy Scripture, as to the immortality of the soul. My friends, it is worth our while to pause further and remember, soul, after all, is not everything, although soul is the highest thing. There is a seriousness, a sacredness, a mystery as to the body. Has the body no part in Eternity? The answer, shortly, clearly, concisely, is the answer of the Creed which all Christians accept as the voice of the Holy Ghost, "I believe in the Resurrection of the Body."

I.

It might seem to be a mere waste of time to examine such a truth. The Church has dogmatically asserted it

in its most ancient formula, in our Baptismal Creed, in its most solemn document. Why examine it? The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth," it is the voice of the Holy Ghost; to its utterances and, above all, to the creeds, and above all to *this* Creed, all—laity and clergy alike—are bound to bow. It is an unassailable fact for a Catholic Christian—"the Resurrection of the Body." Why discuss it?

My friends, for two reasons. (1) There are found men—and men of at least official eminence in the Church—who deny *this* article of the Creed, when to the truth of the *whole* Creed they would nevertheless seem to be pledged. This is serious and mischievous, and when the rulers of the Church pass by such heresy or such folly *sub silentio*, or with an almost implied approval, it is necessary to examine where we are. If there is no Resurrection of the Body, let us be honest, let us expunge the statement from the Baptismal Creed, and plainly and honestly break away from the teaching of the Catholic Church. But (2) as there is no doubt whatever in the mind of any faithful Catholic Christian as to the truth of the Resurrection of the Body, it is a help and a comfort both to examine the grounds in Holy Scripture of that faith, and to grasp the important spiritual consequences which flow from such a belief.

II.

To a believer, then—to an intelligent and instructed believer—I say, the question is really closed. Our Lord founded His Church, and promised to be with it until the end. He promised that His Spirit would guide the Church into all truth. If anywhere, then in the Creeds

we listen to the final decisions on certain points of the Church, that is of the Holy Ghost. Still, souls are helped, are established, by examining fundamental truth.

St. Paul is clear and decisive on the question. He is contrasting in this part of his Philippian letter the low-minded and evil with the true children of Christ. The former are moving steadily on towards moral and spiritual issue. They make their lowest and most degrading and unrestrained passions their object of worship and interest—in fact, their very god. They have learnt to be so abandoned, so corrupted, that they positively glory in what ought to be a subject of shame. The Christian's path, however, is diametrically opposed to this. Their end and object is God and His glory. They are, amidst all their worldly duties and occupations, keeping before them the vision of a heavenly country; and if the body is an occasion for sin to those who live by an earthly and carnal mind, the body to those is a very sacred inheritance, although it carries with it and in it the memory of sorrow and the seeds of corruption. For they—the sincere Christians, to whom Christianity is a serious and a real thing—are looking for Christ, Who will change that body to a different and ideal condition. It is, in fact, as St. Paul says, “a body of humiliation,” and it shall be fashioned like unto the “body of His Glory.”

Of course we ought not fail to remember that all of this—the Immortality of the soul and the Resurrection of the Body—came on the Greek mind with a shock of surprise. As to Immortality, their philosophers had speculated upon the question, and their poets had indulged themselves in views dim and vague and sometimes even

grotesque, but it has been truly said that no one had made it a practical matter, that no one lived for it, and that—except perhaps in “the incomparable death scene of the *Phaedo*”—there have been no serious statements about it anywhere founded upon a sincere conviction.

As to the Resurrection of the Body, that was more startling still. It is true, indeed, that the Greeks looked upon the body as the most exquisite work of art imaginable, that they cared for its development with as much expenditure of effort as they employed for the development of the mind; but they closed their eyes to the destiny of the body—indeed, how could they do otherwise?—and only thought of it in its symmetry and beauty, never casting a glance beyond. It must have been not only with a shock of surprise, but also with a reasoned indignation, that they heard not only what would appear to them wild theories about the future of the material body, but also words which seemed to detract from its peerless beauty.

And here came this audacious teacher, breaking right through the tender mists which had enveloped their ideas of immortality; and, more than that, first of all decrying the body which they so admired, and then insisting on its possession of an impossible future. Surprise, not unmingled with indignation, must, we feel confident, have taken possession of the Greek mind when St. Paul dared to say, with such definiteness and such distinctness, “He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory.”

III.

"The body of our humiliation!" It may have given a shock to the Greek mind, but St. Paul's expression was strictly accurate. However beautiful, however wonderful the human body may be and is, we know full well that it is a body of humiliation.

Think for a moment; first there is the mystery of pain. For whatever reason, the constitution of things is such, that the deepest thing in life is pain. It is with us when life begins; with its strange, its solemn accompaniment we are ushered into the world. We learn something of it in early days; it dogs our steps as life goes on, sometimes in greater, sometimes in lesser degree; to some of us it becomes like second nature, we hardly know what it is to be without pain; it surprises us when we think we are safe; it clouds the sunlight of life and hinders or paralyzes its work; it strains to snapping point the energy and determination of the will. We are tempted to think it meaningless and even cruel; and those who suffer least through life are, alas! fairly certain to suffer before they die. When we are thoughtful, we forgive it, for pain is the groundwork and source of some of the most splendid virtues—self-restraint, tenderness, unselfishness, and a deepening devotion to the Unseen. Still, there it is. The fierce flood of human suffering flows on, and our bodies become instruments of torture or possessions which make torture possible, almost inevitable.

For, when we think of this, we are introduced to that strange district of *feeling*, which is one of the most mysterious and inscrutable in human nature. We

possess a power of feeling by which we—our very selves—*touch* the outer world. Through this comes the large part of the consolations and joys of life. What would be the power of a lovely landscape, or of the divinest music, or of the noblest painting, or of sweet voices of those we love, or of the grasp of hands of those who sincerely feel for us? What would life be without these? And these depend upon feeling. It is well said that feeling—this awful, this blessed power—may be turned back upon ourselves. That which is *the* power for so much enjoyment, may be made an instrument of sorrow, and feeling so turned back upon ourselves is pain.

It is true that, side by side with this certain fact, this deep and tremendous mystery, God is ever providing remedies. It is remarkable that, amidst the slow evolution of things, that with the gradual process of the leaven "leavening the whole lump," with the tardy but steady advance of the power of Christian principle, so it is that it has pleased God to enlighten men by what is called "scientific" knowledge, one of His greatest gifts—to know many and wonderful remedies for pain.

Still, there it is; and as long as one of the most anxious efforts of God's servants is to throw back and conquer the rising tide of human wretchedness, so long must thoughtful men feel the terrible power of pain—so long must they feel that St. Paul is right, it is a "body of humiliation."

IV.

And then there is the mystery of death.

“Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the North-wind’s breath,
And stars to set;—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!”

It is, in one sense, familiar enough—all too familiar! In another sense, how strange! We hear, indeed, the constant tolling of the passing bell; we read, day by day in the newspapers, the lists—the “obituaries”—of those who are gone. We do not feel the power of the fact until it closely touches ourselves. It is sad; in a way, it is natural. If we *realized* death, without the hope and teaching of the Gospel, how could we go on? Part of God’s mercy to us is that we cannot *always* realize. Still, there are times—solemn times for us all—when we are—not by our own choice, but by God’s will—brought face to face with the great fact.

Before us lies the face which so we loved—once radiant with the glow of health, once the very scene and field of the play of every emotion; now flushing into enthusiastic life, now calm, or anxious, or cold with the chill and distress of concealed anxiety or anxious fear; before us there it is still, calm, impassive, cold. No word we speak can alter the expression, no smile or tear of ours can change on *it* the rigid unchangeableness, which means—death.

There was a voice we loved; its *tones*, not merely the words it spoke, were life to us. Our secret, perhaps our deepest sorrow, was to convey to the soul behind that voice, *how dear*, how unspeakably dear, those tones

were to us! Tender the music of the Eolian harp! Sweet the soft sounds of graceful singers in the summer night! And yet, and yet no sound could pierce our souls like the sound of that dear voice—and it can speak to us here—no more!

Think of the clasp of the hand! Think how, when soul meets soul, no word, no tone, no passing glance of living face is needed—that strange sweet touch of hand clasped with hand—saying, more eloquent than words, “I understand you, I love you!” What more than that? Can there be, in the play of the affections which gives the deepest joy to life, more than that?

And *that* goes.

“I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth’s embrace
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

“Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter’d stalks,
Or ruin’d chrysalis of one.

“Nor blame I Death, because he bars
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

“For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.”

Oh, sad solemnity of Death! Oh, dreadful certainty! Pain may be perplexing, may be mysterious, but Death—the passing away of all the sweet, subtle, outward signs of love, of thought, of energy—*this* is heartrending. Surely, surely, dear friends, as we realize pain and death,

in their force, their significance, their consequence, we acknowledge the accuracy of the Apostle's expression—"The body of our humiliation"!

V.

But however lowly be the body, however sorrowful its sufferings and certain its dissolution, after all it holds an important place. The divorce between body and soul is *unnatural*. Nothing can more clearly prove the fallen condition of our race and the sorrows of this world than that divorce. The body may be weak, and pain-laden, and passing, but it is the soil in which is planted the self, the soul. Death—we cannot fail to feel, with St. Augustine, if we *think*—must be an accident in immortality. The divorce of body and soul is saddening, is disastrous, and the instincts of our better nature remind us that it ought to be remedied. Human nature, in man or woman, is *not* a soul alone: it is a soul and body. It is foolish, it is thoughtless, it is unreal, if we allow ourselves to imagine (that is, supposing we hold the Christian faith) that man *can* have, without the body, a permanent life beyond the grave.

The Bible is full of it. It teaches plainly "the Resurrection of the flesh." Never does the Bible treat man otherwise than as an immortal being. Never does it distinguish between body and soul in such a way as to imply the final destruction of the body in the grave. The saddening side of physical life is, indeed, and rightly, acknowledged; but, though dim and shadowy as compared with Christian revelation, still in the Psalms, again and again, always and everywhere, is the deep and solemn sense of immortal life, not for a *bit* of man, but

for *the whole* man. So it is in Job ; so, indeed, in his splendid statement which the Church has adopted as an inspired witness to "the Resurrection of the flesh."

In the same way, man is treated always in the New Testament as *wholly* immortal ; and if there *could* be any doubt on the subject, it is removed—for those who believe in the New Testament—by the words of the Apostle in the text, "He shall change the body of our humiliation." You can't *change* a thing which no longer exists !

VI.

To the believing Christian, of course, the truth of the Resurrection of the Body rests upon a foundation more firm, and incontrovertible, than probabilities as to our nature, or even the general teaching of the Word of God. Not at all. There is something more.

St. Paul boldly, in his argument as to immortality, confronted his converts with the Resurrection of Christ. It is strange and sad to think it, but in our own miserable, invertebrate generation, we are obliged to go back to *the facts* of the first Easter Day. If the Christian Religion be true, *since* it is true, the force of the events of Easter morning is at once indisputable and telling.

He lay in the grave—He, our Master—after His cruel murder on the Cross, and so sanctified our last resting-place, and encouraged our hopes of the future. As the light crept over the earth on that eventful morning, what a change passed upon His Sacred Body ! Through the night—we may well believe—the night of sorrow after His death, the night of despondency as still He lay there, disciples mourned and doubted, and

loving women wept, and angels wondered and adored, as they more and more realized the depth of His humiliation, and the tenderness of His love for man. God was preparing fuller revelations for His Church. The soul of the Eternal Son was fulfilling His place and work in the realms of the dead. As morning stole across the Eastern heaven, life, *the* life, stole back to the Sacred Body. First came, perhaps, the faint flush to the face, then the warmer feeling to the still, cold limbs, then the hands ceased to be rigid, and moved as with the glow of morning, then slowly the eyes unclosed, the angels worshipped, and He—"the Living One, Who was dead"—sprang from the tomb which seemed to hold Him; sprang again upon His own earth—the Conqueror of the grave; rose from the dead in reality, not in any shadowy or silly and fictitious manner—as unbelief or half belief delights, in dreamy reveries, to imagine—*out* of the dead body, but body and soul out of Joseph's sepulchre. Really, without doubt, without silly shadows, without dishonest pretence, *really* He Himself—body and soul—rose from the sleep of death, "the firstfruits" from the dead, and showed, for all who came to see it, that body and soul shall rise again.

On *this* fact, of which he had no sort of doubt, St. Paul rested his certainty, never flagging, of the Resurrection of the Body, as well as the Immortality of the Soul.

Men might have been tempted, and with small blame—such is the tendency of fallen man to doubt, and such the ingenuity of unbelief—they might have been tempted to doubt the Resurrection of the Body; if they are Christians, they have no excuse for doubting it now.

To doubt the Resurrection of Christ, is to put aside all the laws of rational evidence; to doubt the real

Resurrection of Christ's real Body is to maim His humanity, and to decline to receive His direct and unquestionable teaching. Believe the Gospels according to the teachings of common sense, or leave them; but don't pretend to believe them, and abandon or contradict their obvious meaning. Like half-believing "faddists," but with more excuse, the disciples doubted the possibility of the Resurrection of the Body. What did Christ do? He passed *through closed doors*: He vanished and reappeared first in one place, then in another; and when men feared that it was only the appearance of a departed spirit, "*Handle Me, and see,*" He said; "for a spirit hath not *flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.*" Men may, if they please, deny "the Resurrection of the flesh, the Resurrection of the body;" but, if so, don't let them pretend to be followers of Jesus Christ. Agility, beauty, together doubtless with entire impassibility, awful dignity, there were seen in His resurrection body. It was the same, though changed; the very marks of the wounds were in the hands and side. He appealed to them as evidence, but death was robbed of its destructive power; it was shown to be merely the path of change. The real body of Jesus rose from the sepulchre, and in so rising He gave a proof of our Resurrection, and taught us that glorious fact on which rests the statement of the Apostle: "He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory."

VII.

"Ah," you say, "there are difficulties." Truly it is so; and you have plenty of teachers who, the moment you scent a "difficulty" from afar, are prepared to assure

you that neither the Bible nor the Creed *really* mean what they distinctly say. *That* method is no meeting of a "difficulty;" at its worst it is falling in with the follies and unbeliefs of sinful men; at its worst it is pure *charlatanism*, or slightly veiled unbelief. Start with revealed facts; they are (1) Christ's own body, born of Mary, nailed to the Cross, rose from the dead, only, with all the full spiritual capacities of one who belonged to another world. (2) *Your* bodies shall rise, not as a fiction, but as a fact. Your *own* bodies—you have no body but your own—if in Christ, they shall partake of the marvellous powers of His risen life; "He shall change the body of our humiliation, and it shall be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory."

These are the *facts*, which no believer in the New Testament can, without disregarding the morality of language, deny.

Now about the "difficulties." Matter, you say, is indestructible, but constantly changing. It gathers round certain life-centres, and then by-and-by departs, and distributes itself about the world on other errands. The dead body lies in the grave, and under the solvent power of the chemistry of nature, dissolves, and passes off into other forms. "Do you mean to tell me these particles of matter, which may have done duty under so many forms, and in so many bodies, are to be gathered into some *one* body and do duty for it alone in the Resurrection morning?" "No," answers the Christian. But remember one or two things; you have not the faintest conception of what "matter" is. You talk glibly about things, like many so-called "scientific" persons, but do you know what you are talking about? To label a thing is not to understand it, and neither you

nor the most clever chemist who ever lived, have the faintest idea *what matter is*. You label it, you ticket it, you imagine you know it. But what is it? You have no idea. Don't talk so glibly of what you don't understand. Don't dogmatize about "matter." But, again, whatever it is, or if it really exists, the Bible and the Creed say nothing at all about "matter" or "particles" or any other phrase of that kind, used by man in his ignorant groping about the planet. Being in gross darkness, and unfathomable ignorance—in spite of our "scientific" conceit—God reveals to us that our bodies shall rise, shall be *the same*, though *changed*.

Consider, this hand I raise is mine. It always has been mine from the time of my first beginning in this strange life. And yet in this hand—*always mine*—there is probably, at this moment, not one particle of matter which was in it when it clung around my mother's neck—the same, though changed. Well, don't let us be so void of the first elements of intelligence as to deny the Resurrection of the Body—the same, though changed.

VIII.

Your bodies shall rise again.

The Church, and the Bible, which the Church interprets, teach us that. Don't waste your time, arguing about the *how*; God knows. Pray for a grain of humility, so absent from modern teachers, so befitting us—flies on a cart wheel!—and learn to say, "God and His Church are right. I am in dense darkness as to *what matter is*, or *how* God deals with it; one thing I know, in this, my own body, I shall live again—the same, though changed. In Christ, in Christ, the pain,

the death will be abolished. I shall be my very self, body and soul. 'He shall change the body of our humiliation, and it shall be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory.'"

IX.

There are, dear friends, practical considerations which follow :

1. If we sincerely believe in the Resurrection of the flesh, we see a deeper meaning in the Christian Sacraments. Those who have denied the Catholic doctrine, as to the Sacraments, have generally been the victims of a false *spirituality*. In the Sacraments there is the recognition of the body as an important and immortal part of the human being. Can I remind you of this better than by recalling to you the words of the prayer in our own Mass as to cleansing "our body by His sacred Body, and washing our souls in His precious Blood" ?

2. Again, the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body gives meaning to those acts of courtesy, and habits of, what I may call, "good manners," between earth and heaven, which are so terribly neglected, but so graceful, so beautiful, so full of a gracious and humble recognition of another world. The act of *kneeling* in prayer; the bowing of the head at the sacred Name; the habit of bowing the knee in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, these have a real meaning and power the moment you realize the sacredness, the future, and, therefore, in worship, the duty of the body.

3. We learn to think, I submit, from this truth, our duty as to certain modern and popular ideas. *Crema-tion* has been pressed upon us. There are a certain class

of churchmen, who, nowadays, seem to value an idea if it is novel, startling, and opposed to the past. Surely, dear friends, though we may thereby fail in sensationalism, we must not join there. If it is found that the health of the living is seriously imperilled by the burying of the dead, well then the Church of Christ may begin to talk about "cremation." There is no such danger. "Cremation" is part of a Pagan reaction of modern times, which—with a number of other absurdities, and anomalies—a certain kind of weak-kneed Christian is ready to adopt. Since Christ died, and rose again out of Joseph's sepulchre, the instinct of the Christian Church has been to leave the bodies of the dead in God's hand, in mother earth's breast, and not to lay violent hands upon them by fire.

4. We are reminded that one work of the Church is to "sanctify wholly the body and the spirit." I pause to remind you, dear friends, for this work the Church needs *men*. Do parents, do schoolmasters realize how grave a thing it is, in a Christian country, to put before the young, as is often done, every career of secular, though certainly harmless ambition, and keep so steadily out of their sight the highest, the noblest, though, of course, also the least remunerative calling of all? Surely, surely we may hope that more and more, the best, the most cultivated, the noblest, the most unselfish young men, may come forward and offer themselves for so great a work.

Finally, let us learn to recognize the sacredness of our own bodies and the bodies of others. I need not say, if men did so, what a vast territory of sin would be won for Christ.

And, dear friends, if these things are true, we must

not, indeed we must not, merely talk of them, or acknowledge them in a vague and merely acquiescing way; we must think them out, and act upon them. Live, oh! live according to the destiny, the greatness before us. Live with a deep respect for yourselves, your souls, your bodies, and with such a respect for others. Is there room for the eye—glazed, blinded towards Eternity? Is there room for the carnal, selfish life? What?

Ah! picture your walk in this world on the conviction that *all* life here is saved—body and soul. Present your own bodies “a living sacrifice.” Respect and anoint the bodies of the sick and suffering. Love and respect the bodies of the dead. Respect yourselves. Rule the body by the will, filled with grace. The years go on. There is suffering and sorrow. Nature, man’s heart, the Church, the Bible, cry to us all, “The dawn, the dawn!”

Sacred, blessed, full of love and hope and blessing—even in the midst of this sad world—are all things in Christ. Pain, suffering, death, may—nay, must—await our bodies; but, oh! what an inducement to purity; oh! what a power for patience is given us by the revelation of that mysterious yet certain fact, “He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His Glory.”

SERMON XVIII.

The Significance of the Cross.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord."—
GAL. vi. 14.

THE Christian is provided with a wide horizon. He is taught in mysterious words of "the earnest expectation of the creature," and the looking for the "manifestation of the sons of God." He learns, to put it shortly, that the paramount duty is to be "a servant of God." He sees that the Resurrection of Christ *must* involve a state of life, and an attitude of the soul, which imply corresponding *duties* in Christ's servant. He knows something of the help and powers which are offered to him in the Church. He is assured of immortality, and even of the Resurrection of the Body—and all this, and all the truths of Religion circle, he knows, round one serious fact: the Cross. God died upon a Cross to save man. All we do and learn must take its tone from that great central fact. If the Christian view of that fact be true, then nothing can be more astonishing than its consequences.

What is the signification of "the Cross"?

I.

St. Paul is writing in an agony of indignation, of affection, of surprise. He found in Galatia abundant and

enthusiastic affection when his work had lain there—but enthusiasms of apparent affection are not always to be trusted; and people of warm and impressionable natures and characters are not inapt to allow their words—and that without any conscious or intentional duplicity—to outrun their real and final feelings, or at least purposes. The Galatians were a race in whom impetuous emotion was not unusual. Christianity—as represented by the great Apostle—had, so to speak, taken them by storm. There is, however, unhappily not infrequently, a rebound of dangerous reaction after a state of high-strung enthusiasm, and this had been the case with this, at any rate, among the Churches of the Lesser Asia. New teachers had come. They had sought to discredit the pretensions of the Apostle, and with this light-hearted people they had succeeded only too well. They had introduced them to a strange religion: a medley of Judaism and heathenism. The old loved teacher was forgotten. The new instructors were hailed with delight—and this by those who had professed to abandon a discreditable past, and enter within the confines of the Catholic Church.

St. Paul was distressed and shocked and even indignant. True, Christianity was no child's play. True, those who embraced it had to face difficulty, and "endure hardness," had to remember the seriousness of life, and look beyond the immediate moment. But he had told them all this. What else did he expect from a system of revelation, the centre of which was a crucified God? Were men who had known the truth, and welcomed and bowed to it, to find their joy, their glorying, in anything less than this moving, this overwhelming exhibition of God's love? Perhaps so, but not so Paul!

The aged Apostle is moved with indignation and sorrow ; he seizes the stylus from the hand of his amanuensis, and, in spite of his blind eyes, writes on the tablets himself : " Ye see in what large letters I am writing to you. . . . God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord."

II.

And first St. Paul would mean, among other meanings, by " the Cross "—an historic fact revealing a matchless character. For Christianity, dear friends, is a Religion with a history. Men are apt to theorize as to what the Christian Religion should be, or is desired by them to be ; they are apt to forget that the Christian Church has a history. The Church has had grave and moving vicissitudes. She has made many mistakes—for she is human as well as Divine—but she has kept before the eye of men the serious facts of another world, and made God and His glory the chief object towards which to direct their thoughts. She has carried on His work—amidst all her failures—by the Divinely regulated agencies of His own appointment. She has maintained her threefold ministry ; handed in the mysterious and supernatural Sacraments ; guarded and interpreted the Word of God, supported the moral law, and illuminated before the eyes of men the hopes of their future—but all her history and all her inspirations have been drawn from or coiled round " the Cross."

Everything has rested, everything rests on the Person, the character, the work of Christ. *The* striking thing, indeed, about the Christian Religion is, that it is *not* a set of rules or instructions, *not* merely definite advices

or commands ; it is, most certainly and above all things, a Person and a Life.

There was certainly once, though only once, a Perfect Man. There was, certainly, an unrivalled character. The strange fascination of that character drew some to an unbounded devotion, drove some to an unmeasured hate. He had moved men of noble position in their nation. He had touched lives of the lowest. The young men in their roseate years, when, if ever, there is a heyday of enthusiasm, had felt His spell. Lost women had been restored by love of Him to a forfeited purity, and little children had been shielded and comforted by His tender care. His sympathies were wide enough for all. He abhorred pretence. He withstood insincerity and hollowness and hypocrisy. He could be indignant and filled with severity towards hardened and high-handed iniquity, but He was full of gentleness and forgiveness for the unfortunate and the repentant. Strong with a strength like adamant, He was tender as the most loving woman. The most salient points of His character—if so we may say with reverence—were unselfishness and self-sacrifice. The wonder of that earthly life had sunk deep into the heart of the great Apostle ; he summed it up in that which crowned it and was its most complete expression : “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord.”

III.

And, further, this striking expression would emphasize the reality of the struggle between good and evil. *Why* there should be such a struggle, *why* evil should exist at all in the world of a good God, is a

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problem which has ever exercised the mind of man. Dark as it is, nothing throws so much light upon it as the revelation of the Bible. Evil cannot have been *made* by a good God. It cannot have proceeded from mere matter, because it is mere matter; and so, certainly not far from man's bodily nature, which also is an integral part of himself and of God's creation of man. Evil has proceeded from a sad bias and corruption of the human will. Man is not, indeed, at home with it in spite of its prevailing power. He has instincts of higher things, and some strange, if dim, traditions of a splendid past. There is battle, then, between good and evil. Man is not a heap of corruption; he is a ruin, but a splendid ruin—he *can* be redeemed. We live among ruins, and yet around us are powers of rebuilding, of restoration. Sin, too, has not merely come from man, it has entered into him. It has "passed upon" all men, as death has, from spiritual beings more powerful than himself. Evil then becomes a power outside us, as well as in us. It comes to have an objective reality. It takes various forms, and inspires various forces. It has a whole army of its own, and "principalities and powers of darkness have their sway in its vast and energetic efforts."

And as the light of evil is so severe, so dark, so depressing—so ever against it is the glory and strength of goodness, the greatest of all things, the very splendour of the being of God. The cynic, indeed, and man of the world, laughs at the idea of goodness existing at all. But to reach this point men must have sunk deep in callousness and wickedness. In spite of all the clouds and darkness which hang above a fallen race, there are glimpses not only of God's presence and wisdom, but also of God's goodness among His creatures. Evil, indeed, is

pretence ; it can assume many shapes. In our own civilized times, freed as they are from many of the more atrocious forms of wickedness, the more refined and concealed forms are even more common. We have only to think of the falseness and dishonesty in politics, in commercial matters, in society—which are all too common ; nay, we have only to look within our own hearts and notice the constancy of temptation, and the too frequent treachery of the will, to remember that, though perhaps under changed conditions and different appearances, yet still, as ever, there is a fierce enemy to encounter, and the great battle goes on. But above all, we Christians are warned to be on our guard by the spectacle of Calvary. The Great Captain of our salvation there engaged in the fiercest of all fierce struggles with the enemy, and fought, as we know, with unflinching persistency, “loving not His life, unto the death.” If we are cajoled into fancied security, we waken up again to the twofold reality of the late struggle between good and evil, by the fact of “the Cross of the Lord.”

IV.

But more than that, what is it to every human heart not seared with sin, which makes life worth living ? The answer is—Love.

It has been truly said that the play of the affections constitutes the highest happiness of life. This, indeed, can hardly be doubted. Man is gifted with a supply of desire. What he most earnestly desires acts as the Pole to a loadstone. Man also is a social being. Though in one sense so strangely, so singularly alone, in another he is unable to feel full satisfaction for himself and his

life without an interchange of thought and life with others. There are, of course, men of astonishing, sometimes of colossal, selfishness—but they are in the truest sense unnatural, and approximate to devils. Sensual sin itself, bad, degrading, and disastrous as it is, is not so ruinous and detestable as the refined selfishness of a bad heart. Love has been degraded in fallen man, but where any remnant of it is still to be detected, *there*, there is some vestige of the nobility of our nature. Noble love is unselfishness. It is the going out of the heart to the needs and thought and sweetness of another—and man is at his noblest and best. And whenever there is about him some of the touch of higher things, he learns to love, and desires to be loved. This lies at the basis of all worthy social intercourse; this is the true foundation of the thought and fact so dear to the English people—the thought, the fact of Home.

Now, what is it that the soul, once wakened to think of the grave realities of life, really desires? It desires so to *know* that God loves it.

There are many indications of benevolence and kindness to creatures; there are also—it is impossible to deny—many marks of severity, and perplexing spectacles which start perplexing problems. Men have sometimes been not disinclined to draw hasty conclusions from these, adverse to the character of God. They have forgotten the wide extent of their own ignorance, and allowed themselves to draw hasty and large conclusions from very limited premises. Still, there it is, there are difficulties, and, in darker moments, even the most devout Christian desires, if it may be had, a solid assurance from without. Such an assurance he feels to be supplied by “the Cross.” “If God so loved us that He gave His

only begotten Son for us, how shall He not, with Him, freely give us all things?"

Strange it is that *that* even in religion, which has been, by the opponents of Christianity, most constantly instanced as an act of injustice, and a meaningless thing—the Crucifixion, the Atonement—has more touched and drawn out the human heart than anything else. There is a meaning in this. The only meaning which adequately fulfils the conditions of the problem is, that Great Fact was not an expression of injustice or caprice; it was an expression, an exhibition of the love of God for fallen man. *That* fact, however impenetrable be the mysteries surrounding it—henceforth we know.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord."

Why further? Well, surely that awful sacrifice throws much light upon the peculiar sorrows of the Catholic Church.

We all know, if indeed we think at all, that the *inner* and *outer* life of an institution, as well as of an individual, are very different things. The outer life of the Catholic Church has been, in many particulars, a great disappointment. There have been sorrows and disasters. There have been times, like the tenth century, when things have been in the most pitiable and disgraceful confusion, and the world itself seemed to have taken possession of the Church. It has been not unusual in our time for those—such as the Romans in England—to dwell upon the divisions and troubles of the Anglican Church, and to assure the unsuspecting that in the Roman Communion there is always harmony, unity, and peace. This is a great mistake. The Anglican Church has indeed had her troubles, but nothing—not

the darkest moment in her history—has ever approached the misery of the time when the See of St. Peter was governed by the most execrable scoundrels, or rather by their mistresses.

For the point is this, that the Church at all times, and in all parts, has had her troubles. In her *inner* life, indeed, she has always had that large army of the humble, the sincere, the faithful, the hidden servants of God. They, by their prayers and their holiness, have saved her; *they* have been the "salt of the earth"; *they* have preserved the body from corruption; *they* have prevented it from being offensive in its Maker's nostrils.

That *inner* life of the Church goes on. There is still abundant goodness, abundant holiness, unflagging devotion. The outer life of the Church, however, is still and ever will be one of ups and downs, one of toils and sorrows. It is no use our being angry and impatient. We are quite right to disapprove of what is wrong, and in proper ways and at proper times to let our disapproval be known. We are quite wrong, however, to fret against and find fault with our own part of the Catholic Church because of the sins or follies of some of her members. To the end of the chapter there will probably be worldly ecclesiastics, ambitious of high position, and not over-scrupulous as to the means by which they attain to it. To the end of the chapter there will doubtless be over-cautious and cowardly Bishops, bowing to the "world" which crucified their Master, and placed in their high places for any reasons but the right ones. To the end of the chapter there will probably be worldly or lazy Priests sitting very light in their teachings to the Catholic Faith. All this is, of

course, deeply to be deplored, and to arrest these things, so far as we are able, is our duty.

There is, however, another side to the picture. There are noble-hearted and apostolic men in high places ; and there are plenty of hard-working, hidden, and faithful Priests, as well as numbers of devout and faithful laity. To do God's work we had much better grumble less, and pray more. For the truth is, the Church, like her Master, at the close of His life, is here in the throes of her passion. In all her troubles God has never forsaken her. She has ever within her, in her saddest moments, a mysterious power of revival, because, though wounded, and hurt, and crucified, she is the Body of Christ, and in her she has the life of the Holy Ghost. Still, these are the times of her crucifixion ; the morning of her resurrection has yet to come.

V.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross." This principle leads us still farther.

There is something more than the Catholic Church ; there is the Kingdom of God ; that government as it has been called somewhere of which one race and one epoch is an inconsiderable fragment. That government which, indeed, touches the present, but extends far beyond it. This life is, indeed, real enough, as we all know. It takes up our attention, and makes large demands upon our efforts. Its sights and sounds dazzle our eyes and fill our ears. Nevertheless it is strange and short, and unintelligible, and full of vanity and shadows. Side by side with it, or rather all round it, holding it, so to speak, in its arms, there is a higher

order of things; there is the Kingdom of God, and the King is reigning from His Cross. The power and the mystery of that Cross have entered into the heart of the reality of things, and can never cease to be.

For we belong, and we know well enough that we belong, to two worlds; we are children of nature, and we belong to an Unseen Kingdom. All that we touch, and see, and have to do with is to us of vast importance, but what is beyond the reach of sense of vision is of importance vastly greater. Some day what here seems to be good, but shadowy, will have become the very reality; what here seems so full of failure, will have been changed for victory; what here seems so miserably imperfect will have given way to completeness.

This world cannot fail to appear, at times, relentless and hard. Doubtless, for some people it is not an altogether unpleasant world when they have abundance of health and plenty of money, when they are honoured, when they are powerful. But even for those who are here the children of good fortune, there is sure to be plenty of sorrow. Health cannot last for ever, friends are sure to go, even riches, which are here so powerful, cannot do everything, and death must come. And then when we think of the vast mass of misery and unhappiness that there is in the world among those who do not belong to the more fortunate members of society, and how very very difficult it is, even with all the efforts of good people, to throw back the vast pressure of human wretchedness, we begin to realize how nothing can account for it, and nothing can console except the mystery of the Cross. We do not know one half of the unseen workings of God's government of His own world, but we do know that those workings are sure to be

according to a mind of goodness and holiness ; we do know, as I have said, that there is that mysterious principle by which, out of darkness is brought light, by which weakness, sorrow, and self-sacrifice are not the worst things in the world, but are instruments for noble purposes, and having in them, when sanctified by grace, mysterious powers, not to be measured fully in this world, but known to us to be such by the revelation of the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VI.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord.”

And now for ourselves, we are members of the Kingdom of God, and we are members of that executive of that Divine Kingdom, which we call the Catholic Church. At our disposal are placed the powers of the Cross. From these come all the strength of mysterious Sacraments, and the vigour and force of prayer. The entire work of the Church as it goes on adding to and building up Christ's Kingdom among souls gains its strength from that mysterious transaction, the death and Passion of the Son of God.

But more than that, we have here the secret of moral improvement, of the building up and strengthening of our own characters. We can measure our advance in spiritual life, not by an increase of our wants, but by a diminution of them. We have to learn that real greatness is attained, as God knows it and loves it, not by learning to have, but rather to give ; not by striving to rule, but to serve. It is by that self-discipline and self-denial—so uncongenial often, as we know, to human

nature—that we grow in force of character, and come nearer to the spirit of the Kingdom of God. That is to say, it is by the power of the Cross.

VII.

Well, then, let us learn, as a safeguard to that noblest of all things, innocence; as a power of deepening that beautiful thing, which in some measure all of us must learn—penitence—to imbibe as a force in our spiritual being the spirit of our Master's Cross.

In our better moments we hope and desire that our hearts should be set on the highest things. Well, the way to the highest things is through the lowest. It is through commonplace duties loyally done, through trifling troubles well borne, through fretting anxieties bravely met, through self-denial for others lovingly embraced—that is by the cross applied to common life, that we rise to the highest things.

Look beyond, then, dear friends, look beyond. The spring on the slopes and in the valleys of Umbria laughs with its masses of flowers under a sparkling sunlight; the summer light on a dreaming sea smiles in beauty on the dancing waves; the evening sunset behind the Malverns clothes the soft English landscape in a glory of gold; but the mountains were swept with winter winds, and the seas were lashed with pitiless gales, and the hills were clouded with mist and wrapped in rain. So it is in life, in the life of man. There is a sorrow, but there is a hope, and the brightness of the hope depends upon the sanctification of the sorrow. Joy will come through religious trial; we may truly glory in the Cross.

We live in the midst of many ruins of God's work. Darkness and ignorance, self-will and passion, have, indeed, made sad havoc of the nature of man; set your will, notwithstanding, for God first and above all things. Endure and do, with the thought of your Saviour before your eyes. It is said that on the night of the battle of the Milvian Bridge, he who became the first Christian emperor, saw in the heavens the vision of the Cross, and in that sign determined to conquer; and he did. In the battle of life, if we raise our eyes with faith, the same vision will be before us, and we shall learn that by self-denial, self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and trust in God, anything can be done. God give us grace to realize it, and to act upon it! Even through the thick atmosphere of London, sometimes rising high above the fog, and shining in the sunlight, appears the Cross which crowns the dome of St. Paul's, "*Stat Crux dum volvitur orbis.*" Still amidst the tumults and changes of the world stands the sign of our redemption, the stimulus of our hopes, the pledge of our victory—the Cross of Christ.

SERMON XIX.

The Providence of God.

“O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.”—
Ps. lxxxiv. 12.

THE psalm, dear friends, from which these words come, is quite possibly, and even probably, a psalm of the captivity. Probably one of the children of captive Israel was gazing through the mist across the plains, across the river, across the great ridge of the hills, in his sorrow and in his desire, looking forward to the land which represented to him not only the home that was so dear to him, but representing the joy and desire of Religion. And whether he wrote from beyond the great distance, or whether he was actually returning to the privileges and delights of his own old home, at any rate, from first to last throughout the psalm, his heart and mind are filled with the greatness, the splendour, of a real Religion.

I.

For man, my brothers, has many great things given to him in this life; but, amidst the vast gifts, amidst the immense interests, amidst the constantly changing phases of invention, of discovery, of intellectual activity,

of artistic powers, amidst all the mysterious and wonderful things which God gives him, if there be a God, and if there be a living soul, the greatest of all great things is Religion.

And here the psalmist is dwelling upon that wonderful fact, and noting how the soul that realizes the greatness of Religion is a soul which is advancing from strength to strength, until it appears before God, not merely in the Zion which the exile loved so dearly, but in the final Zion of all. It is the tracking of the religious life; it is the voice of yearning, and the voice of joy; and it closes with the expression of the serious truth, which any man who is religious at all must realize—the truth, that is, of the Providence of God, and the truth of a man's real beatitude when he grips that fact, and when he acts accordingly. "O Lord God of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

II.

My friends, on an occasion like this we are thrown into some of those deeper, more fundamental, more simple forms of thought which belong to any serious view of life. Your harvest festival has about it many associations. Autumn has come again, and with autumn there has been the changing leaf, and the golden corn, and the quiet stateliness when Nature pauses after summer joys, and seems to meditate in calmness before she plunges out of her robes of golden glory into her robes of winter gloom. Autumn has come again, and with it have come not only those tender thoughts which touch our inmost sensibilities, but there have come the thoughts which touch our spiritual life. The harvest which brings

to us the constant sense of the first necessities of physical existence also reminds us of the great truth of our immortality, and the undoubted, the unquestionable, the mysterious, the magnificent fact of the Resurrection of the Body. But as the harvest has many associations and as all external nature is only the outward sign of a Great Sacrament, the suggestive source of higher and nobler thought; so, above all things, with our natural feelings as English people, and all the surrounding scenes that there are about the harvest, carrying us back to old memories, it may be of old homes—when “the harvest home” was a delight, an amusement, a great festivity—carrying us back to many memories, touching our hearts, because above all things we English are at once practical and true, still, the harvest festival above all is this, I submit—it is the Festival of the Providence of God.

III.

We have failed sometimes now and again, as you know, in the chequered history of our nation and our Church, and we have lost here and there the grip of some real truth. But there is one truth which, thank God, the English people, on the whole, have never lost—the devout, deep sense, the quiet, solid certainty that, amidst the changes and chances of our mortal life, amidst the strange ups and downs of a world so awful as this, there is the constant evidence of God’s love for His creatures, and of God’s protecting care. My brothers, your harvest festival, whatever else it is, is the Festival of the Providence of God. And does not that remind us that first there should be, as there has been, as I trust you have felt, a great thanksgiving? that you are not

taking for granted the mercies and the goodness of your Father without giving thanks for His constant and watchful care? and that then, if your thanksgiving is to be what it ought to be, there are religious lessons for your own life? Glance at these for a moment to-night. For life—yes, life *for* every one of us—is surely a most perplexing problem; and life has one or two characteristic facts which bring home to us the need of a belief in providential guidance, if, indeed, providential guidance may be relied upon. Before each one of us, day by day, there are perplexing duties, there are things which are sometimes hard, and yet ought to be done, which are *due*, as our conscience tells us, but they are often perplexing. And it is true, remember, that if you do the duties of to-day, you wake up to find fresh duties of to-morrow, that they are perplexing, that sometimes they are severe, that they make a call, they make a great call, upon the nerve and the brain, and the thought and the affection, and that now and again, overwhelmed with such duties, the heart sinks and the mind gives way.

There is a second characteristic fact of your life. There are not only duties; there are trials and temptations. We do not pause to ask why. God must govern His own world in His own way; but we do know—ah! we all know too well—that trial is a mark of mortal life. Temptation, trial, comes to us all. Shall we stand?—we have so often fallen! Can we bear?—we have been so often broken down! If duty is perplexing, trial is tremendous, and yet it is a certain fact of every day. And then there is the other mark of life—there is danger. Day by day, and night by night, we are moving through a strange, a marvellous world; and our bodies are so constituted that, in spite of their rich

endowment of forces, they are instruments of torture, and they to us mean again and again the deepest and most awful thing—the presence of that most mysterious visitor, pain. And when pain shall strike us, or whether danger shall come, and whether or not we shall suffer as others have suffered, how do we know? We cannot foresee, we cannot take the measure of a life so mysterious which comes to each of us once, once and no more; when passing across the stage of immediate opportunity we pass out of darkness and despair perhaps, at last to the darkness of the grave.

IV.

There we are, then, with life, saying two things, work and suffer. And there we are, as Christians, knowing perfectly well that in our work God has not called us all to success, but He has called us to labour. And there we are, not forgetting that these things, work and suffering, make up life. And then we look out to the outer world, and we go below the surface and we read something deeper than the sweets of ease, of self-pleasing, or of luxury. We read something deeper than the quiet statements of common things in the morning newspapers or the attractive novel; and we find that the real, serious, anxious work of men and women who are in earnest, is to try to throw back the stream, ever increasing, ever rising, of human wretchedness, which they find it impossible on the whole completely to throw back. And as we remember that life is *that*, then there comesthe moment—does there not?—when the heart sinks down, and when all the forces of being seem to surrender to a great despair. We have all dark moments,

sometimes in the working life, sometimes alone in the quiet night, when only the clock is ticking on the stairs and no voice is heard, and the house is dim and still ; when things come up, our own serious thoughts, our own great failures, our own sadness and sorrow, our distresses, our perplexities, our fears—those come up to each of us, and how are we to meet them ? That is a religious lesson from the Festival of the Providence of God.

My brothers, we can meet them in one or two ways. We can meet them—perhaps the philosopher can do so—by a quiet reasoning that it is not sensible, that it is not wise, to dwell upon such things for practical purposes, that Doubt is not—for practical purposes—a basis of action, and Fear is not a leverage for success. But we are not all philosophers. Or we can meet them with a stolid insensibility to facts as they are. We can rush through life blinding our eyes to real things, not thinking at all nor caring to think. But, my friends, we are not all insensible. Or we can meet them perhaps with a quiet, determined courage, for “ever the worst turns the best to the brave.” We can meet them with the strong and determined heart of the brave man who faces danger without fear. But, again, my friends, we are not all brave. Or we can meet them—and that is the way in which we ought—we *can* meet them, it is truly said, by putting against them a serious thought, a real fact ; and I submit that in all serious life the one thing is to rest upon *fact*. There is a fact revealed by the Christian Religion ; there is a thought brought home by the Bible, by the Church. The fact is intended for the use of every one of us ; the thought by God’s goodness is placed at our disposal. In the dark moments of life, in the sad trial of our existence, in our forebodings, in our

fears, in our perplexities, in our doubts, before us is placed the *fact* and the teaching that those who trust Him, God will guide, and He will never guide them wrong. And to fall back upon that great truth is to remember the fundamental principle of a strong religious life—confidence in God. “O Lord God of Hosts, blessed, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee.”

V.

My brothers, what shall we say, then? We remember, do we not, that there are some thoughts which come out of this, and which may help us in our thanksgiving?

(1) If we learn *that* quiet confidence in God, we learn the mystery, the majesty, the necessity, the dignity of prayer. We learn how to carry every detail of our anxious lives to the feet of Him who will listen and will guide. When once we trust Him we can place all in His hands, and we can place it with unflinching confidence. And as it helps to prayer, so, dear friends, it helps to the exercise of that virtue of which prayer is the voice.

(2) There is no virtue, I believe, among all the forms of manly strength (for that is the meaning of virtue) that is so needed by a hard-worked, by a busy, by a deeply serious people like ourselves—there is no virtue so much needed as the virtue of Hope. It is our *duty* to hope. It is the exertion of a moral power of the will that withstands despondency and despair, and it saves men from many a disaster and from many a bitter mistake if they settle it in their minds that they will hope

and hope and hope, struggling against what are called the "toilsome and incomplete" trials of their own sorrows, and remembering always that they have a right to hope if they put their trust in the Greatest and the Best. It teaches us the virtue of prayer and the power of hope.

(3) My brothers, just this besides. It brings home to us if we meditate upon it that which men too constantly forget, that they have a Father. The poet dwells upon the father's tenderness, the tenderness of a real father to the child he loves—

"Beat upon mine,
Beat upon mine, little heart, beat, beat;
Beat upon mine, you are all my own,
From your dear, deep eyes to your feet;
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet.

"Sleep in my arms, my child, my bliss,
And I give you this, and I give you this,
And I close your eyes with kiss upon kiss,
My own, my son.

"Father, indeed, will watch you grow,
And gather you roses wherever they blow,
And find you white heather wherever you go,
My son, my own.

"So beat upon mine, little heart, beat, beat;
Beat upon mine, you are all my own,
From your dear, deep eyes to your feet;
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet."

And the father's love of a *real* man is the faint reflection of the glow of the love of Him, Who is above us all, saying, "Beat upon Mine, dear heart, beat, beat!" and therefore when we remember the teaching of the Providence of God, we are brought back to the great fact

of facts, that we have a Father, that we can cast our care upon Him, for He careth for us.

(4) And we are brought back to this final fact, we remember that if in the struggles and the troubles of life we learn to trust, and trusting in God to try to do His will, then we are steadily forming that which is most important, the filial character. For, my brothers, do not let us forget that autumn after autumn, and harvest after harvest, comes round to remind us of the greatness of change, and the passing character of all that is; and although there are splendid things in this life, and many things about which we are bound to have a sincere enthusiasm, the great gifts of civilization, the great opportunities of work and doing good, the revelations of art, the stateliness of poetry, the splendour of music, the better understanding of one another by the nations of the world, and though all these things are indeed glorious, and we may have an enthusiasm about them, yet do not forget they pass, and all goes on. There is, however, the greatness, there is the self-denial of the Cross of Christ, there is the witness to the love of the Father.

Then, when all that is passing has passed, *then* there will come the last great harvest home, compared with which the finest objects of our best enthusiasm will seem like the thinness of a dream. And what will remain? What *will* remain, when you and I are swept like autumn leaves before the gale, is the *character* that has been formed in us by love to, and trust in God—our purity, our tenderness, our kindness, our strength, *that* will remain when everything else has gone into nothingness, and we shall know it then. And on such a night as this, therefore, as we make our thanksgiving, as

we remember the care of our Father, we shall learn again, my brothers, trusting His wisdom, trusting His power, trusting His goodness, trusting His love as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, that "God's greatness flows around our incompleteness, and round our restlessness His rest."

SERMON XX.

The Claims of the Church.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Ps. cxxxvii. 5.

THERE can be, I suppose, little doubt as to the place and meaning of this psalm.

We are perplexed and bewildered, in an age of criticism, by the varying statements as to the date and the authorship of the psalms. It is a characteristic of the age we live in that those who hold in scorn the tradition of the Church as to the meaning or origin or dates of her own sacred books, will give the most implicit and unhesitating credence to the dictum of the last critic on anything connected with them.

As to this psalm, however, I suppose there can be no sort of doubt or controversy. It would appear to be evidently a psalm of the captivity. We are used to the Book of Psalms as being the very Prayer-book of the Church, and sometimes forget the marvellous way in which—being a book of Divine inspiration—it records feelings, and fears, changes, anxieties, troubles, and even histories of the Past, and in these at once embodies and foreshadows conditions of souls and records of God's government for all time.

It has been pointed out how this marvellous

collection of sacred poetry differs from any other collection of a more or less similar character in this way. While other such collections speak of the mysteries of life and of the world; of the forces of nature, of the miseries of man, of the awfulness of a Supreme Being, and of the unseen world; this marvellous book leads us to think with an even passionate affection of God and all that belongs to God. So here we have a cry of a deep devotion, of an unflagging faithfulness, of heartrending sorrow, but of a truly religious character, with a meaning for us all.

I.

The psalmist is an exile. He is separated from his beloved country, from the sacred city, from that spot which, of all the earth, he has learnt to cherish as at once his Church and his home. He is straining his eyes, his tear-dimmed eyes, across the vast reaches of distance, across the river, across the separating wall of the Abarim. Beneath his feet, around him, before his eyes, are the magnificent monuments of an imperial power, and a resistless monarchy. All that wealth and power, all that vast resources, all that inhuman cruelty, using human beings to do the work of a selfish and pitiless *will*, *could* achieve in luxury, in splendour, in material evidences of greatness, were pressing upon his senses; but what cared he? With all the frightful thralldom to which man has been subjected by man, the human spirit, after all, is free. At least within the sacred precincts of thought, *it* can expatiate, unfettered by the most relentless tyranny. The poor exile loses sight of the manifestations of human grandeur in his

loving gaze towards the cherished centre of the Religion of his fathers. Why should human things dim the vision of Divine facts? Why should the earthly close the eyes to the heavenly? Why should mere glitter and flash fascinate so that abiding beauty should be unheeded? Why should his heart be taken by the iniquitous splendour of the city of his captivity? Why should he be enthralled by "the world," and close his heart to the city of God? He cannot endure the thought of such folly, of such treachery. "If I forget thee," he cries in a spasm of love and sorrow, "if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

II.

Now here is a lesson for us all.

What is it, dear friends, for us *not* to forget Jerusalem? Well, first, it is to have a loyal and loving spirit towards the Kingdom of God.

The Bible is ever dwelling upon that Kingdom. It is a rule, a government far above this present life, and yet touching it at many points. It has to do with the noblest form of legislation; it embraces in its wide-extending sway the vast, undreamt-of beings of the Unseen world, but it also holds and sways the hearts and consciences of men. It is strange and intangible, and not to be defined by ordinary methods, yet appealing to the imagination and touching the heart. It is a *real* force, a *real* power, the most dominant power, the most overwhelming force in the world—it has to do with holiness and goodness, with the triumph of the highest things, with law which is Eternal and all-righteous, with the supreme Governor of all things, whose rule is

righteousness and truth. To carry in our hearts and consciences a deep and settled reverence for God's law, to remember His all-enduring sway, to feel more and more that all that is good and beautiful is of Him, and from Him, to have a lofty sense of His nearness and glory, to keep the ear of heart and conscience open to His whispers and inspirations, to have unflagging faith in the final triumph of Goodness, unfailing hope in Him upon Whose promises we may justly lean, unwavering love for Him Who is love itself—this is some measure of loyalty to the Kingdom of God; this is, so far forth, not to forget Jerusalem.

III.

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.”

Again, what is it, *not* to forget Jerusalem?

Certainly it is to maintain an unshaken loyalty to the Catholic Church. Christ our Master founded, as we know, a great society. He endowed it with many excellent gifts; He made it above all the temple on earth of His Holy Spirit; He provided it with a three-fold ministry, handing on and ministering His gifts from age to age; He promised to be with it Himself unto the end. This society is the Catholic Church.

It has been on earth the executive of the Kingdom of God—yet, in some ways, what a poor executive! It has had a strange and chequered history. It has passed through many vicissitudes; it has made great mistakes. Being human as well as Divine, this was sure to be; indeed, the Great Founder Himself foresaw and foretold as much. It has been at times apparently captured by

"the world;" it has sunk to depths of degradation; it has gone down so low that men could hardly believe that it ever could rise again. It has been governed by worldly and wicked ecclesiastics. It has lent itself to even inhuman cruelty. It has been the history and the example of a great disappointment. Further, it has been the scene of a serious family quarrel. East and West have parted company with an animosity and rancour not yet dead. The West again has been rent by the Roman and Anglican separation; and even to this moment men have before their eyes the foolish spectacle of the Latin part of a great communion degenerating into little else than a Jesuit sect, and advancing more boldly its foolish pretensions to be the *whole* Catholic Body in proportion as it alienates the people still left to its charge, and continually increases dogmas founded neither on history, tradition, or revelation.

But there is another side. There is the interior life of the Catholic Church discerned by the eye of faith as the great and beautiful reality. Nay, apart from what may be properly called the "interior life," there is that marvellous social influence and force and energy which have told so upon the world. The Church has in the course of her chequered history used all means that came to hand to advance her work—the schemes of politicians, the correspondence of friends, the machinations of enemies, the social movements of a particular age, the hopes and ambitions of peoples, the fears of the evil, the efforts of the good, the change of customs, the variation of fashions and opinions—all, all that has been in human history, the Church has known how to utilize to religious ends.

And in the interior life, properly so called, the

picture is a bright and blessed one. It is *there* that we see the Church in her real and deep unearthliness. For *in* her, amidst all exterior confusions there is a heavenly energy and performance.

In the Middle Ages one of the facts which strikes the reader as most remarkable in the history of Florence, is the way in which the noble work of great artists and great literary geniuses went on, apparently undisturbed, amidst the continual clash of arms and collision of opposing feuds and terrible street brawls.

It is a not inapt picture of much of the life of the Church. Whilst there is much to sadden us *without*, there is much to gladden us *within*. Justly enough it is called "the *Holy* Catholic Church," for among other reasons it deserves that epithet because it produces—it is the home of—*holy* souls. Amidst all the various confusions to which the Catholic Church has been subjected there have ever been those hidden ones who have been living in God's presence, who have been in constant communion with God, who have been "the salt of the earth," and the leaven, "leavening the whole lump." Amidst the strifes and struggles which have marred the face of Christendom there have been holy and hidden Priests faithfully and quietly shepherding souls, and building them up in the Faith; there have been hidden and humble lay people doing their duty, fervent in prayer, faithful in sacramental life, true, and gentle, and generous and persevering—with their eyes fixed on Eternal things.

For the Holy Ghost has ever been dwelling in the Church. He makes His habitation there by indwelling every baptized soul, and reinforcing its powers by the grace of Confirmation; He is ever at work guiding the

Church and the souls in the Church, by His gentle influence and His clear light. It is *thus* that, in spite of all external divisions, the Catholic Church is one, and witnessing to and proclaiming the one truth.

In the ancient part of the Catholic Church—the Eastern—there may be stiffness, there may be mistakes. In the Roman part, there may be pride and exclusive folly, and a tendency to exalt opinion after opinion to the rank of dogma. In the Anglican part, there has been a spirit of compromise which has, sometimes, gone too far. There has been a stain left by a traditional modern puritanism, sometimes blurring the lines of the ancient Faith, and narrowing in the liberty of the gospel. Yet, after all, there are those truths upon which *all* agree—these constitute the Catholic Faith; thus there is before us the vision of the great communion, with the tradition of the Sacraments, the guardianship of the Holy Scriptures, the threefold Apostolic Ministry; the living voice of the Church in the Creed of Nicea. After all, appearance is one thing, reality is quite another. After all, beneath the distressing and disheartening look of things, there is the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, the home of Divine truth, the witness to another world. Surely, if we realize these things by faith, if we think earnestly of the actual facts, and the supernatural blessings which God gives, we can think with love and reverence of the Catholic Church; we can say with sincere heart, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning."

IV.

Again, what is it, *not* to forget Jerusalem? Well, it is to cultivate a spirit of unflagging loyalty to the English Church.

We surely need, first of all, to have clearly before our minds *why* we hold any supernatural truth. The one reasonable reason, so it seems to me, dear friends, is that the Catholic Church has borne witness to it. There is, as I have ventured to remind you, a grand substructure of truth held in common by every part of the Church, and that is the Catholic Faith. There is, however, a vast margin for opinion and custom. It has pleased God that different parts of His Church should have different ways of "putting things," according to the diversities of "times and men's manners." The Roman part "puts things" in a Latin way: so much so, that if you enter a Roman Church in this country, you scarcely can feel that you are in England at all. Having no mission nor jurisdiction in this country from Christ, it is essentially *un-English*.

The English Church is that part of the Catholic Church which holds Christ's commission *to us*. It is our duty, therefore, to love her and be loyal to her. It is not our duty, of course, to assert that she has no faults, and has made no mistakes. Each part of the Divine family has done that. Still there she is, God's messenger and minister to us in heavenly things.

We have been carried in her arms in Holy Baptism, and, through her, made "members of Christ," and temples filled with the Holy Ghost. We have been nursed at her knees, as children, and learnt from her

the first beginnings of our Faith, and the first Holy habits of Devotion. Through her we have received the increase of the Holy Spirit by the seven gifts through the laying-on of hands, in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through her, we have been made partakers of the Bread of Life, as we have been allowed to feed on the Lord's Body and Blood under the form of bread and wine. We have, with her, offered "the sacrifice of our ransom," and joined in stately and loving prayers—and all in our own dear mother tongue. She has taken us in her arms in infancy; she has watched, helped, guided our steps amidst the dangers of advancing years. She has blest the young man and maiden on their marriage morning. She has been with the sick in the hours of pains and weakness; and when all here was over she has stood—to express a glorious hope—by the heart-stricken mourner on the edge of the open grave.

Her enemies have been quick enough to point out her faults, and she has, alas! had faint-hearted sons, who have opened their eyes wide to these, while closing them to the deeper sins of other parts of the Church. It is true, indeed, that there have been worldly ecclesiastics in high places, appointed to their high functions for any reasons rather than the right ones. It is true that there have been careless, lazy, worldly, and even heretical Priests—to the injury and scandal of God's people. There is, however, another side to the picture. There have been holy Bishops, and devoted Priests, and faithful and loyal laity, and the English Church, if, alas! at times she has fallen low, neglected the poor, submitted to secular tyranny, and spoken in unsupernatural tones, yet she has never fallen so low as, alas! other parts of the Church have, and she has shown that marvellous

vitality and power of revival again and again which can only come from the Holy Spirit of God. If she has, at times, seemed to fail in a *devotional* temper, she has, at any rate, taught her children the value of truth and duty, of uprightness and honesty, of purity and sobriety—of a life of calm and faithful diligence—lived in the faith and fear of God. If you cannot fail to see blemishes and faults in our Church, surely, dear friends, we should “strengthen the things that remain;” we should be loyal and loving, we should grumble less and pray more.

So shall we think of her as we ought to think. So shall we help her on in furthering God’s loving purposes to souls. “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning.”

V.

What then? If, indeed, our hearts beat true to our Lord above, we shall not be indifferent to His characteristic work. Of that work we think especially to-day, and for it you have been offering your intercessions.¹ If the preacher is allowed, through the kindness of your Dean, the privilege of addressing you to-day, it would appear to me to be his duty to hearten you up in all the efforts you may make for *the* work of the Church. The characteristic work of the Church is Mission work. The Church of Christ is a Missionary Society, or she is nothing. From the very first it has been so, and so it must ever be. To that fact we owe all the knowledge of Divine things which is the most

¹ Preached in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on the day of Intercession for Missions, Dec. 3, 1897.

precious treasure of our lives. We are surely called to do for others what has been done for us. The demands upon us are very clear and strong. We are rulers of a vast Empire. In the mercy of God, and in spite of the unpatriotic efforts of some, England has, on the whole, recognized her responsibility, and is carrying freedom and civilization to distant parts of the earth. It is then the duty of the English Church to carry Religion, to carry the Catholic Faith along with the English flag. There are other races brought within arm's-sweep of our influence; there are our own colonists, our own sons and brothers needing the means of grace. Devoted men are sorely needed. It is said that the advance of things, and the change and watering down of opinions have left our Universities as dangerous shoals to our young men, depriving them of enthusiasm, and teaching them *nil admirari*, as the spirit for men. If it is so, it is deplorable, but all the more must the Church exert herself. It is a grave responsibility which rests on Christian parents and Christian teachers if they fail to keep before the minds of our boys and young men the high claims of the ministry, the nobleness of the Christian Priesthood, as the chiefest of all callings for man on earth, and the need that they should learn that, what English soldiers are willing to do for the Empire, Christian Priests, the young, the strong, the devoted, should be ready to do for the Church of Christ. For some of us the opportunities are well-nigh gone. The larger parts of our lives are irrevocably fixed and past for better for worse; but for some of you, my younger brethren, it is the dawn of the morning, and there lies before you the grand opportunity of all opening life. Blessed are you, if in your hearts is kindled a true enthusiasm for the

Church of Christ and her glorious mission ; blessed if, amidst the abused claims and distractions of modern life, ye do *not* forget Jerusalem.

VI.

And if we ought all, directly or indirectly, to take some part in the characteristic work of the Church, so, most certainly should we all be more diligent in the practice of her characteristic duty.

Brethren, that of course is Prayer, in its most comprehensive sense. Publicly and privately to be faithful in prayer is to be a faithful Christian. The Church indeed calls us to her own "Great Prayer Meeting" when we unite in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice—the one only service appointed by our Lord Himself; and the offices of the Church, the Matins, the Evensong, and all such special days as this appointed by authority, still represent the voice of the bride to the bridegroom, and the regulated communion of souls with God.

But we ourselves must learn more and more to be in our private, in our own inner life, more faithful to the constant duty of prayer. If only, dear friends, we think over and realize in some measure the far-reaching promises made to prayer, we should surely be more faithful in the use of this privilege and power. The effects of prayer on the soul itself, in calming and comforting and exalting it, are very wonderful, but far beyond these are the promised effects in helping thereby the advance of the Kingdom of God.

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." It is the constant energy of the prayers of God's people, which is *the* force for the advance of the

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Church. If, dear friends, we are *not* to forget Jerusalem, if we are to advance the cause of goodness, if we are to advance the Kingdom of Christ, we must be men of prayer.

VII.

And then, further, the heart that is fired with some enthusiasm for the mission work of the Church will place its trust in God. The advance of the Church's cause, of the cause of Christ, sometimes looks like a forlorn hope. In an age like this, where there is such boundless energy, and when temporal and material things fill so large a place in our thoughts and plans, it is only too easy to forget God, and the servant of God often finds the stolid indifference, the hard, callous, unfeeling worldliness, a thing more difficult to break and bear up against than open revolt against the truth. And yet the Lord reigneth, be the people ever so impatient.

An adaptation of the words of a poet, which I have already quoted to an Oxford audience, expresses exactly the true relation of the servant of God to His Heavenly Father.

An earthly father realizing responsibilities, and with his heart full of love, may be supposed to speak thus to his baby boy :—

“ Beat upon mine, little heart, beat, beat ;
Beat upon mine, you are all my own,
From your dear, deep eyes to your feet ;
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet.

“ Sleep in my arms, my child, my bliss,
And I give you this, and I give you this,
And I close your eyes with kiss upon kiss,
My own, my son.

"Father, indeed, will watch you grow,
And gather you roses wherever they blow,
And find you white heather wherever you go,
My son, my own.

"So beat upon mine, little heart, beat, beat ;
Beat upon mine, you are all my own,
From your dear, deep eyes to your feet ;
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet."

We Christians may hear in this the faint echo of the voice of a Heavenly Father on Whose heart ours may beat. We may learn, however saddened we may be at the difficulties in the way of advancing His Kingdom, confidence in God. Let us look up then with that firm confidence in Him, and trusting in His power and love to assist us, *not* forget Jerusalem.

VIII.

For, after all, the Jerusalem to which here we are faithful is the preparation for the symbol of a better country, and an Heavenly, to which we look and long. There are many gates to the Heavenly city. The gate for "the just made perfect;" the gate of those once slaves of Satan, now—having set their faces to the morning—God's own children saved and cleansed; the gate of God's pity where those enter who, having lived in sin, by a miracle of mercy are led to contrition at last; the gate of the ignorant and sorrowful; the gate of the penitent thief. There, too, is the gate of the King where none can pass but He Who knew no sin. There are the gates of the devout and righteous, of those "who hunger and thirst after the righteousness;" of those who conquered temptation by firm

resolve; then the gates of those who mourn for sins not their own; of those who, wanting in many things, at least persevered; then, too, the gates of those, saved at the last "so as by fire"—and then the gate of those, of whom man, of whom the Church knew nothing—the secret gate of hidden contrition, of such as were known only to Him Who knows the hidden ones, and Who can save by the very terms of His nature of tenderness—can never spurn the being who, though late, alas! and known only to His omniscience, comes to Him with a broken and contrite heart.

Let the Church, then, on earth, take courage. Let God's servants "quit them like men, and be strong." Let us *not, here* forget Jerusalem, for she is the means to, the representative of, that heavenly Jerusalem "which is the mother of us all," and whatever *here* the troubles, dear friends, "there shall be no night *there*."

SERMON XXI.

The Sacraments of the Church.

“Great is the mystery of godliness.”—1 TIM. iii. 16.

ST. PAUL is speaking of the Incarnation. He is struck by the awfulness and greatness of that love and condescension by which God came to be one with His creatures, one of ourselves. It has been said truly that we can well imagine God loving us because we are His own creatures, but the wonderful thing is that apparently the only way to save us was, or at any rate the way God *did* choose to save us, was by becoming one with ourselves.

I.

St. Paul speaks of the Incarnation as a great mystery, and so most certainly it is. For by a mystery we mean a truth, a fact, a reality—not a dream or mere idea—which is partly revealed and partly concealed. Men have been sometimes inclined to find fault with the idea of there being mysteries in Religion; and yet, when we come to think of it, we could hardly imagine a Religion, in any sense of power for man, without mystery. For all life is mysterious;—our very being, our bodies, the course of things, the material world around us—all

is mysterious. Habit and custom lead us to imagine that we know all about it, but when we break through these in thought, we find only the depth of our ignorance. Things are partly known, partly concealed; they are—like Salvator's "Hope"—the dark veiled; they are, in fact, mysteries.

It has been pointed out by thoughtful teachers how evident it is that, far from mysterious ideas being impossible or unpractical, they are constantly held and used, and must be, by the human mind. So that a truth being mysterious makes it in no way contrary to reason, but places it among that class of truths which have to be represented in a way suited to our limited faculties, as they are in themselves *beyond*, not contrary to, reason. It has, indeed, been thought that to talk of holding a truth, without having a distinct idea of it, is only juggling with language, for that really means that one does not hold it at all. Men thus have doubted the Incarnation on the very ground that it is a mystery; that to say that a Divine Being and a human being are but One Person, is really to make a statement which does not represent a distinct idea, and which, therefore—so it is argued—is not really held as a belief at all, but which we only imagine that we hold. This view is the strong point of Socinianism. It is, however, only apparently strong, for as a matter of fact we *have* ideas which are not distinct and exact ideas, and which yet are eminently practical. We have—it has been truly said—an idea of substance, of mind, of spirit, of power, of infinity, of cause; and, what is more, we have an idea of these which is of practical value; we cannot form a complete and exact conception of these truths, but of the truths themselves we have ideas—and

working ideas. The fact being, that the human mind is so constituted that it can know of the existence and reality of certain truths, of which truths in themselves it can form no adequate conception.

In other words we are able to hold, and hold for real and practical purposes—mysteries.

The great mystery of which the Apostle speaks being the Incarnation, we are able to believe, and to believe in such a way that we can act upon the belief. The mystery of the Incarnation has, and must have, far-reaching consequences, upon it must evidently hang other mysterious truths, and these in the same way we are able to believe and act upon.

II.

The Sacraments have been called "the extension of the Incarnation." They, that is, carry out certain efforts of that central mystery for all time and to many men. It is not, as we believe, merely the "men of Galilee" who saw Christ on earth, who have the benefits of His marvellous condescension, but much more: those who, like ourselves, can receive the Sacraments, and so especially become "partakers of the Divine nature."

"Great is the mystery of godliness"—we shall not be wrong, then, if, when the mind rests upon this central mystery, we examine one of its chief consequences, and think of the sacramental principle as held and taught by the Church.

For, indeed, it is, ordinarily speaking, by the Sacraments that we are enabled to have these blessings. We obtain grace, we preserve grace, we increase grace, and we recover grace when grace is lost. And by "grace,"

dear friends, I mean God's power and life extended to human souls.

It is, therefore, and it must be of the gravest importance for a Christian, if, indeed, he has the opportunity of instruction, to understand the nature of Sacraments. He ought to receive them properly ; and, surely, to receive anything properly requires that we should understand, and that we should be properly prepared. I have no hesitation in saying that a want of knowledge of the real dispositions that are required for receiving any Sacrament, is often the real cause of a want of fruit in receiving the Sacrament. Surely, if this is the case—although we quite believe in our Lord's love overflowing the Sacraments—it is, at least, one reason why what He has ordained for our help and comfort and advancement, becomes to us sometimes useless, and sometimes even hurtful.

We must all feel, must we not, that God our Father deals with us with, what I may call, common sense ? To use more distinctly theological language, I ought to say, He accommodates Himself to our actual condition. We are, of course, immortal spirits ; but we are not only that, we are also bodies ; and it is part of the teaching of the Catholic Church that the body has to be sanctified, and that there is a glorious destiny for the human body. If Sacraments, then, be, as I have maintained, an extension of the Incarnation, they must touch the body as well as the soul. Remember, dear friends, that one mark of heresy, or of insufficient Christianity, is the attempt to deal with the soul without remembering the sacredness of the body ; that it is only in the Catholic Church that you find that true and serious grip of things as they are, which is shown by Sacraments.

III.

A serious Christian can have no doubt that God has appointed Sacraments — outward signs with inward powers—for two reasons, on which I wish to insist: (1) to signify or represent the grace that is in them; (2) to confer that grace.

Now, as to the first: whatever sign God gives, it is intended not only to convey to us some approach to the knowledge of what it is, but also the knowledge of something else. This is what St. Augustine says. For instance, money is said to represent to us in itself a special metal, *also* to represent a special value. And so it is that the outward signs of the Sacraments are really intended, so it would seem, by God, to signify an interior grace which is joined to them. There is a certain likeness between the outward sign and the thing signified. Water poured upon the baptized child, together with sacred words, in a sense represents that unseen and marvellous work by which God washes and purifies the infant soul. So it might be said of the other Sacraments. And therefore, again, Sacraments are not empty signs and merely representative; but though they do *represent* the interior grace, they are what are called by the Fathers, “efficacious signs,” for they *produce* really what they represent. In fact, this is the great difference between the signs of the Old Dispensation and the Sacraments of the New. Those older signs were only *representative*. They did not *convey* any power. St. Paul calls them “weak and beggarly elements.” They had no power in themselves to give sanctification; they had only power to represent God’s gifts. The Sacraments of the Catholic Church, on

the contrary, not only represent the kind of grace that is given, but contain in themselves, and give to those who do not place any barrier in the way, the grace which they represent.

IV.

It is certainly important to remember that the virtue or power of the Sacraments, whatever it be, does not depend upon the goodness of him who administers it, nor upon the faith of the soul that receives. The virtue or power depends upon God. An unworthy or evil Priest may baptize, may give absolution, may consecrate at the altar, and the Sacrament will be perfectly valid and true in each case, though the man himself be sinful. Again, a person without faith and without penitence may use the Sacrament of Penance, or the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, without indeed blessing to themselves—nay, on the contrary, only with the retaining of their sins; but the Sacrament in each case is a real power of God.

People are sometimes inclined to say, dear friends, What possible connection can there be between material signs and facts that are purely spiritual? Let it be answered frankly, There is no necessary connection except by the institution and command of God. Jesus Christ, as I have pointed out to you, is God and man; He has united in His own Person the material and the spiritual; He, and He alone, knows the mystery of our mysterious nature; He has instituted the Sacrament to meet the needs of that nature. It cannot be too often said, because we are so strangely thoughtless about the fact, that we are spiritual beings, and that we are always

touching this mysterious and material world through material things. Our very eyes are only telescopes through which the living soul is enabled to perceive exterior facts; our very ears are only organs by which the living soul can catch the sounds of an external world; our power of touch carries to us mysterious messages of that which is without ourselves. Great and wonderful and beautiful is that marvellous spirit which is in each of us, and yet which must have intercourse with other spirits; and if that spirit must have such intercourse through the powers of sense, is it wonderful that in dealing with those relationships—which are not only human but also Divine—there should be external signs in conformity with our bodily condition, representing and conveying spiritual facts in conformity with the condition of our souls? You grasp a hand you love: what is it, whence comes the secret that makes that one little hand the dearest of all? Do you tell me it is mere sensation? Do you dare to tell me that? Pardon me, you know that you lie. It is an immortal spirit dealing with another immortal spirit by a medium appointed by the God that made us all.

Sacraments, when you come to think of them, are expressions of the common sense of Religion. You cannot have a real Religion for real men and women without Sacraments.

V.

There has been a general feeling in the Christian Church that, though the world and life are Sacramental, yet there are specially Seven Sacraments.

You know what I mean: Baptism, Confirmation,

the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders, Marriage, Unction. It is striking, and it is true, that there are really seven things necessary for the ordinary life of man, viz. to be born, to grow, to be supported in life, to recover health when health is lost, to increase strength when strength has been injured by sickness, to carry on the succession of human life by the birth of children, so as to form a future generation, and to preserve the human race.

Well, then, consider: Baptism gives life. Confirmation strengthens life. The Eucharist continually nourishes life. Penance restores life, or reinvigorates life for those who have lost it, or shaken it by sin. Unction strengthens the powers of life when they are failing in sickness, or supports them amidst the terrors of death. Orders perpetuate the ministry of the Church. Holy Marriage perpetuates those who are to be either the children of the Church or her pastors. There seems to be, then, a real analogy between the needs of human life and the Seven Sacraments of the Church.

It is important to remember that every Sacrament has its own peculiar power. As regards dignity and greatness, of course, there is no Sacrament to compare to the Eucharist; for it contains the Author of grace as well as grace itself. The Sacraments of Confirmation and of Holy Orders are great and dignified, because they can be administered only by the highest officers of the Church. The Sacrament of the Holy Marriage is of great stateliness, because it represents the most marvellous of all mysteries, the union of the Godhead with humanity of Christ with His Church. The Sacrament of Unction is great, because of its expression of the tenderness of Christ, and its easiness of reception. The Sacrament of

Baptism has a special dignity, because without it we cannot be in the Church at all; because by it we are made temples of the Holy Ghost, and "put on" Jesus Christ. The Sacrament of Penance is dignified because it is the certain restoration of grace to those who may have lost through sin at least some of the grace of their Baptism.

The English part of the Catholic Church has been careful, and rightly careful, to point out that there are two Sacraments which possess a dignity beyond all others, and which are universally necessary to salvation—*i.e.* if they can be had; these are, Holy Baptism, by which we are introduced into the Catholic Church and made one with Christ, and the Holy Eucharist, by which we feed upon His Body and Blood, and offer the "sacrifice of our ransom" to God. But the English Church, no more than any other part of the Catholic Church, neither means, nor can mean, that the other Sacraments are to be neglected, much less despised. Of this I may speak again. For the moment, it is enough to remember the general significance of Sacraments.

Well, to be quite exact, we must remember that in every Sacrament there are certain important things. First of all, it is important that there should be the right *matter*. That is, it is important that the Church should always make use of the actual *things* or *actions* appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus in Baptism we must use water, in the Eucharist we must use bread and wine, in the Sacrament of Penance we must use the act of absolution, in the Sacraments of Confirmation and Orders we must use the laying-on of the hands, and so on. These things are what are called by theologians the *matter* of the Sacraments.

In using such things it is necessary, in obedience to our Lord, to use certain words, determined directly by Himself, or indirectly by Himself, through His Church. I pause to say, Do not allow yourselves to think for a moment that words are of no value. "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." He Who came among us as ourselves, came as the *Eternal Word*. It is a great danger of shallow thinkers to imagine that it really does not matter about the words used in solemn things. It does matter. The word is the expression of thought; the thought is the expression of the soul; the soul must be obedient to God in those serious mysteries that connect human and Divine life. Certain words must be used in the administration of the Sacraments, and those words are what is called the *form*.

Again, there, of course, is needed in administering the Sacraments, not only a *matter* and a *form*, but also *intention*. We have to remember this, and we have to be careful how we remember it, especially, because the Roman part of the Catholic Church amidst her many sins—particularly in this country—has been so unfaithful to the doctrine of intention. What is meant, what has been meant by the Church always, as regards this, is that the minister and the congregation, and those concerned, generally *intend* to do what the Church has appointed. The minister, for instance, may be a Churchman who does not grasp the full meaning of the doctrine of regeneration in Baptism, but he intends to do whatever the Church has told him to do, and his own private and mistaken interpretation of the teaching of God as to the Sacrament does not in the least interfere with the intention of the Church. The fact is, the Church—the

Body of Christ—has placed herself far above any possible weakness in the *intention* of her Priests. It is the great intention of the Catholic Church, carrying on age after age the mysteries of sacramental grace, which is the really important thing. I need not dwell upon the absurdities of modern Romanism in this regard. That part of the Catholic Church, we may trust, will repent of her sins and her follies; if her foolish teaching as to *intention* were pushed to proper consequences, there would be no sort of approximate certainty either that any Christian is baptized at all, or that there is any real Priest or Bishop in the Church. We may put these absurdities aside, dear friends; they are only the unfortunate efforts of those who are driven to extremities by a controversial position.

VI.

In connection with our subject, however, we ought to remember this:—the general effect of all Sacraments is to give to the human soul sanctifying grace, but that grace is conferred in various ways in accordance with the end or object, or nature of each Sacrament. Some Sacraments give sanctifying grace directly, others increase it. Baptism and Penance, *e.g.*, are intended to enable the soul to pass from a condition of sin, or of absence of grace, into a condition of union with God. There have been theologians who have called these Sacraments, therefore, “Sacraments of the Dead.” It is a strong, and perhaps an exaggerated expression, but it is meant to remind us that they are specially the Sacraments which give or restore spiritual life to the soul dead in sin. The other five Sacraments are intended, in

various measure, and in various manner, to *increase* the grace which we have already received. They therefore have been called "Sacraments of the Living." We must remember, however, that every Sacrament has its own special character or effect, something peculiar to itself, something that God intends through it and not through another Sacrament: *e.g.* in Baptism it may be truly said we are made Christians, we receive the Holy Ghost, we are united with Christ. In Confirmation we receive special gifts of the Holy Ghost, we are made soldiers of Christ, strong to fight against increasing temptation. In Holy Orders we receive the special power in the soul for administering the gifts of God to His people. In Holy Marriage, power is received to sanctify the union of soul and body of man and woman for the glory of God, and so on.

It is well to remember this: that certain Sacraments, so the Church has always taught, give a *character*. They give a character, but they also give a grace. Dear friends, do not let us forget that grace may always be lost by unfaithfulness, but *character* never can be lost. For better for worse a man is Baptized, Confirmed, Ordained, and that seal which God has placed upon him must be upon him for ever. We hear sometimes, in these days, of men "abandoning their Orders." They never can abandon their Orders. They may commit the unfaithfulness of pretending to be laymen when they are really Priests, but the seal of Ordination can never be withdrawn. It is also a saddening thing that, owing to the exigencies of controversy, the Roman Dissenters in this country have induced persons who have fallen away from their Mother Church and joined them, to commit a grave sacrilege. They have *repeated* Baptism,

Confirmation, Orders. To repeat these Sacraments is to commit sacrilege.

We must remember, however, for ourselves, that to receive the fulness and blessing of the Sacraments we must take care to be faithful in right dispositions. There have been, undoubtedly, those who have received Sacraments without the dispositions, or without the fulness of the dispositions, which ought to be theirs in approaching God, and yet, by sincere penitence, when they have wakened up to their thoughtlessness or neglect, have revived into activity that sanctifying grace which God had given them in the Sacraments.

VII.

Then, dear friends, I have only to say in this connection, what ought to be our thoughts, speaking broadly, in connection with these things. Surely, we must feel something of the love and tenderness of our Blessed Master in placing at our disposal means so easy, and yet so powerful, for our advancement in the grace of God. There are many powers in this strange world. There is the power of the sunlight and the power of the storm; there is the power of the fierce and vigorous tempest; there is the power of the stern and unrelenting frost. There are powers of mechanical invention which fill us with astonishment and, justly enough, with admiration at the ingenuity and ability of man. I have seen the great engines in Chicago pump up some hundred thousand gallons of water a minute from the great lake for the use of the great city. I have felt the fierce wildness of a hurricane on the North Atlantic, and wondered not more at the combined force of winds and

waves than at the marvellous vigour and thought of man who could baffle their ferocity. I have trembled—you have trembled, dear friends—before words of overpowering eloquence coming from a living soul on fire. Or your being has been swept through by the tide-wave of emotion by the unexplained force of marvellous music, or the penetrating tones of song from a human voice. You know then, we all know, what is meant by power; there is no power in this wide world like the grace of God, for it can deal with, and change, and transform, and reinvigorate that most marvellous and most wilful of all things—the free will of a living soul; and that wonderful power is, not indeed confined to—far from it—but given in, with special efficacy, the Sacraments of the Church. Thinking of this we ought to have, ought we not, a deep respect for those marvellous mysteries, an earnest care to use them well, and an ever-deepening and increasing gratitude to Him Who made such easy and yet such serious means for our advance in godliness, and Who won them for us—let us not forget it, whatever the explanation may be—by the price of His Precious Blood.

SERMON XXII.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

“We are all baptized by one Spirit into one Body.”—1 Cor. xii. 13.

ALL who believe that Christ has founded His Church, and that He guides it always into all truth, must realize the serious necessity of understanding the nature and place of the Sacraments. There has been a well-intentioned but mistaken way of talking about the Sacraments, implying that people are “dogmatic” if they are precise, and “narrow” if they are accurate. We must not, dear friends, ever allow ourselves a “narrow” or “dogmatic” temper; but we must, on the other hand, be careful to remember that, with all the large liberty of the Gospel, there is such a thing as the Law of Christ. We are unthinking, we are rash, if we venture to make light of that law. The real heart of the sin of “heresy”—which St. Paul declares to be one of the works of the flesh—is the *choosing* our own way instead of abiding by God’s revelation, and thinking that we know better than God as to His dealings with His own Church and His own world. This fatal temper has led to most of the confusions in Christianity, and it has made men think lightly, especially, of the Sacraments. “Where is the use,” men say, “of a little water, a little bread and wine, and a few words?” Where indeed?

None, except from the all-governing fact that these are used according to God's appointment, "Who ordereth all things according to the counsel of His own will." It is much better, it is more humble, it is more fitting, that we who of ourselves know nothing at all about this mysterious life of ours, should sit down and learn what God has to teach us by His Church, instead of carping and criticizing. This applies especially to the Sacraments.

I.

As regards Holy Baptism, there are two things to be said on the threshold of the subject. (1) That there is nothing, probably, about which Holy Scripture is more distinct and emphatic. Those who feel any respect towards the Bible, must have the deepest respect for this Sacrament. If it were not so, we might be tempted to indulge in the shocking suspicion that our Lord and His Apostles took pains to lead us wrong. (2) That as Baptism coming from God, must, in the Christian dispensation, be a channel of grace and a means of life, and not a mere external symbol, so we must be accurate as to what it does give. It is the Sacrament of *regeneration*, not of *conversion*; it is the great example of free grace; in it God does what He wills and what He has promised. He gives special spiritual life to the soul. In *conversion* there is implied the willing co-operation of the soul with God's work; the deliberate turning of the creature, whether slowly or suddenly, to his Creator. Had this obvious distinction been remembered, we might have been spared many of the controversies of Christendom.

Let us, then, examine the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism in itself, of course, means washing; and the

Jewish Church employed it in a purely external sense. It is one of our Lord's regular works, to put fresh life and new meaning into old forms.

Holy Baptism was *instituted* by our Lord Himself, in every particular. On this the Church of England dwells with emphasis, in giving it a place of special dignity. It seems to have been our Lord's way to foreshadow the mysteries of His kingdom before He formally instituted them. This mystery, or Sacrament, He foreshadowed in His conversation with Nicodemus; and the Church has always held that, in His own baptism, not only was the mystery of the Holy Trinity revealed, but that He "sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin." It was, however, after His resurrection that He seems formally to have instituted the Sacrament, when He said to His Apostles, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We know that that command was obeyed by the Apostles. We know what enormous importance was attached by them to Holy Baptism. St. Paul, even after his miraculous conversion, had need to be baptized; and again and again in his spiritual writings he recurs to the mysterious power of this Sacrament: "They that are baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ;" and here in the text, "We are all baptized by one Spirit into one Body." The unspeakable importance of Holy Baptism has never been lost sight of in the Catholic Church from the day of our Lord's institution until now.

II.

What—this is an important question—according to the teaching and custom of the Church, are the *matter* and *form* of this Sacrament?

As to the *matter* there can, of course, be no question. "Except one be born of *water*," are the Lord's own words, against which there can be no appeal. It has been, indeed, a pious custom to bless this water with the sign of the Cross; such a custom, of course, ought to be preserved by all who have the finer instincts of the good manners of Eternity, but this is not essential to the *matter* of the Sacrament; the *matter* is water, pure water. A further important question is, *how* the water is to be used. There are three ways in which it has been used in the Church. (1) By plunging the person to be baptized, into water, or, as it is called, by *immersion*. (2) By pouring water upon the person to be baptized, or, as it called, by *infusion*. (3) By sprinkling water upon the person to be baptized, or, as it is called, by *aspersion*.

Of these, the first, which was the older way, has been for the most part disused in the Western Church. I believe it is still practised in the Church in Milan, which clings tenaciously to her own customs in various matters, in spite of the efforts of the Roman See. The reason of its disuse for many centuries in the West, generally, has arisen from consideration for the health of the baptized person, in places where the climate is cold or variable, following our Lord's saying, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" *i.e.* "I will have sacrifice, but not without mercy." It is recognized by the Church that, as a necessary condition of the Sacrament, the

water should be applied to the head of the person baptized, but if that were not possible for any reason, then to some part of the body. It is, however, in the highest degree desirable that it should be applied to the head, that is, to the seat of thought; and that if, from necessity, it be otherwise (which, of course, would be very rare), the baptism should be renewed under conditions if there be opportunity; and it has been usually felt advisable by the Church that the water should be so applied, that it should *flow* or fall from the body of the baptized. Baptism by *sprinkling*, therefore, is not desirable, and would only be used by those who are insufficiently careful about the administration of the Sacrament.

Then as to the form. The use of the water must be accompanied by the words appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There is, then, in the administration of this Sacrament, a distinct and solemn act on the part of the one who baptizes, and the statement of the intention to baptize a particular person, and to baptize that person in the name of the Holy Trinity, and there is to be what is called a "moral union" between the use of the matter and the form, so that the whole thing forms one single action; whoever baptizes must use water, and must say, "I baptize *thee* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and it must be done with right *intention*.

Now, with regard to *intention*, it is necessary to explain, once for all, as to the use of the Sacraments. A great deal of unfortunate controversy and confusion have been introduced on this point by one part of the Catholic Church—viz. the Roman—which, for party purposes, has

been tempted into introducing new and unworkable doctrines upon such solemn subjects. All that is meant by intention is, that the person baptizing should be seriously intending to baptize, not to "play a joke," or to "make fun," but to do whatever was right to be done, as a serious matter. A person administering a Sacrament has a right *intention* when he *intends* to do whatever is proper and serious and right; whatever, in fact, Christ and the Church and the Bible require, though he may have himself a very insufficient sense of what that is. This is the meaning of *intention*, held by the Church in all times, and this is proved by the fact that the Church admits Baptism as perfectly valid and lawful, even when administered by heretics, by unbelievers, by lay persons, by women, who may have had an entirely insufficient sense of the full meaning of Baptism, but who *intended* to do a solemn thing according to their lights, required by the Church or God. You must therefore remember, that Baptism administered by what is called a "Low Churchman," or a Dissenter, who may have very insufficient knowledge of the fulness of the meaning of the Sacrament of Regeneration, is really Holy Baptism, just as Ordination administered by a Bishop who may hold heretical doctrines, denying the reality of the Priesthood, but who is intending solemnly to fulfil what he believes to be according to the mind of Christ, is real Ordination. It is this large, generous, and wide view of intention, always held by the Catholic Church, which pulverizes at once the mischievous and destructive theories on the subject of modern Romanism.

You must remember, therefore, that in case of need, *any one* may baptize a child, although in administering the Sacrament there is, of course, a regular order to be

observed if possible. A Priest should be preferred to administer it rather than a Deacon; a Deacon rather than a layman; a layman rather than a woman. The Sacrament of Baptism is *absolutely necessary* for entrance into the Catholic Church. God, we know, will always do His best for all His creatures wherever they are, but it is part of our responsibility that they should be brought into Catholic unity, and that they should at least receive the grace of Regeneration. While, therefore, it has been necessary, as God has guided the Church, that in order to enter into that Church a soul must be regenerate by water and the Holy Spirit, this Sacrament has been made most easy of access. The simplest of all elements is required for its matter; simple words and easily remembered are required for its form; any person—in case of necessity—is appointed as its minister.

I have been told that in modern times some have taught that we are to avoid administering Holy Baptism unless we can be quite confident that the person baptized would be carefully brought up in the Christian faith. I do not believe there is any authority for such teaching. If I may be pardoned the expression, it seems to be one of the modern “fads,” so injurious to the simple and direct acceptance of the Christian faith. It is, indeed, our duty to do our utmost for the Christian education of Christian children, but it is a strange want of trust in Almighty God if we refuse to bring them into His own family, in His own way, unless we are sure that *we* can do everything else for them. In the present condition—the very mournful condition—of primary education in England, for instance; in the difficulties which the Church has had to deal with in meeting the demands of modern reactionary paganism in our wretched system

of Board Schools; in the limp condition of Christian opinion, and the want of vigour and determination on the part of some of the authorities in the Church, we should soon have, according to such a doctrine as this, to disuse Holy Baptism on a very large scale. We are certainly bound, as far as we can, to bring souls within the Catholic Church—leaving, very often, the rest to God. “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.” I cannot imagine any more complete dereliction of duty on the part of a minister of Christ than the neglect to administer Holy Baptism, where it lies within his power, to those who are not baptized.

III.

It is interesting—indeed, it is important, dear friends—to remember certain other things which the Church has felt about Holy Baptism.

There is, of course, but “one Baptism for the remission of sins.” Properly speaking, there is but one Sacrament of Baptism. You can only once be born into a natural world; you can only once be born into the supernatural life of the Catholic Church. Where there is a *doubt* about the administration of the Sacrament, we are of course bound, as our Prayer-book teaches us, to administer it under conditions; but there are few things more saddening in modern times than the manner in which the Roman schism in England especially, sacrilegiously, and, in the strict sense of the word, *scandalously*, repeats a Sacrament which we are forbidden to repeat, in the cases of those who have been unhappy enough to leave the Catholic Church, about whose baptism there is no doubt whatever, for that schism.

There is, therefore, properly speaking, "one Baptism for the remission of sins." God's grace, however, as we know, overflows the Sacraments; and although it would be rash and wrong to look for any gift of God except where God has placed it, yet in one sense the Church has always felt that there are three kinds of Baptism. (1) Of course Holy Baptism proper; (2) what has been called the Baptism of Desire; (3) the Baptism of Blood. It is believed—and that is consonant with God's goodness and mercy—that where the soul deeply desires Holy Baptism, but for some reason has been unable to obtain it, or where one has died for Christ, as was sometimes the case in early ages, God did not permit the soul to be wanting in the blessings of Holy Baptism which would have belonged to it had it been possible. These wisely felt beliefs of the Church tend to bring home to us at once the necessity of Holy Baptism where it may be had, and the love of our heavenly Father for the soul which entirely desires to do His will, in cases where it cannot literally be done.

IV.

It is important that we should have accurate and definite views as to God's revelation on these matters. As a people, we are inclined to be what is called "undogmatic." The reason is, that we fear to be narrow or business-like in religion, and to lose the heart and warmth of things in mere theological statements. Of course there is this danger, but there is the opposite danger also. People do not enjoy the swing and rush of the railway engine, or the steamship at sea, or the ship under sail, merely by the study of statics or dynamics,

or the laws which govern the motion of the winds; but the study of these is necessary in order to produce the practical effects. People do not enjoy the scent of the rose in its full-bloom beauty merely by studying the state of the soil, or the condition of its roots; but the exquisite colour and the tender scent are, after all, dependent upon the roots being healthy and the soil being good. So it is in Religion. The real thing is "love, joy, peace;" the real thing is union with God, and the solid effort of a holy life. But foundations are important; and, after all, God knows best, and we are His friends if we do whatsoever He commands.

We are taught that the *effects* of Holy Baptism—effects proceeding from the free grace of God—are of the most serious importance. They may be gathered up, indeed, in the one word Regeneration, or the New Birth. About this, Scripture and the Church are perfectly distinct. It has pleased God, in His wonderful government in His own world, to act in this way. One law of His government seems to be, that the remnant should be the power to affect the whole. One family is chosen, one tribe, one nation, and then in the New Dispensation, when the fuller revelation came by Jesus Christ, out of all the nations of men there is chosen the one great family—the family of the Baptized—the Catholic Church. We cannot know all God's counsels, but we may be quite sure that that family—in spite of all its family quarrels—has an immense effect upon those who are outside its borders. The first, then, the broad effect of Holy Baptism, is that the soul is born again into God's special family.

As we examine this, we find that in Baptism there is the remission of sins; and in the case of the infant

who is unconscious, and who has not committed actual sin, there is the restoration of that robe of original righteousness, the loss of which is known by the name of original sin. By this we are enabled, if we will, to fight against the results of the Fall in ourselves, and to overcome by grace. In consequence of that Fall, indeed, we have still bodily weakness, sorrows, and death; we have also the dangers of ignorance, of misdirected desire, of inclination to evil; we are part of a great body, the body of mankind; we are subject to the rebellion of rebellious appetites; we are obliged to watch and to fight. But we have a new power within us, and, in so far as we are faithful, from the very weakness of the race to which we belong, we have fresh opportunities of noble actions and high merits in Christ. If with our will we use the powers given to us, we have help of grace, and need never fall into serious sin, but be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." We are children indeed of a fallen race, but we are also children of a nobler assembly—"by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body." The effect of Baptism, then, is to give us sanctifying grace; we are in an especial sense the *children* of God, not merely His *creatures*, and Jesus Christ the Eternal Son—Who is the Saviour of all men—is *our* Elder Brother. But more than that, we become by Baptism temples of the Holy Ghost. Dwelling in us, He gives to the soul foundation virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

There has been a modern idea—originating piously, no doubt, in a desire to exalt the Sacrament of Confirmation—that in Baptism there is no indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but only the sanctifying of an "empty temple," whatever that may mean. This we may brush

aside. I do not believe there is any real authority for such a notion, which, in fact, would empty Baptism of its most serious meaning and deny its most important effect. When we consider the Sacrament of Confirmation, dear friends, we shall see what it is that the Holy Ghost does through that Sacrament. Meantime let us remember, that whenever we see a baptized child, we see a child of God, and a temple of the indwelling and Blessed Spirit; and further, that in that soul His regenerating power not only binds us to Christ and makes us part of Him—which would be impossible if we were only “empty temples”—but also extends in a mysterious manner to the body, as an earnest of a seed of our Resurrection to Eternal life.

V.

Of course, the practical result of contemplating such a Divine revelation is of the highest importance. When St. Paul speaks in his Epistles of the most mysterious and loftiest things, he invariably ends by practical duties.

Surely the first duty of the baptized is to walk by faith, not by sight; we are God's children, we must trust our Father. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and we must not “grieve,” much less “quench,” that Blessed Spirit Who dwells within us. It is a sad thing to think how weak is the faith of many baptized Christians, how little they trust their Father. Our faith may be, ought to be, firm and courageous and practical. It is distressing to realize how many professing and baptized Christians act upon purely *natural* principles, and really deal with supernatural principles

as though they were moonshine. This we must not do. We must learn to place a high value upon the grace we have received at Holy Baptism. We must try to remember that we are, and try to learn as remembering it, children of the King. *Noblesse oblige*; the baptized Christian should learn to act with the dignity of a child of God.

Our own Catechism teaches us, in carefully measured words, what our duties as baptized Christians are. Put in plain words, they amount to this: to avoid what is wrong, to believe what is true, and to do what is right. There are, of course, there always must be—for otherwise we should not be in a state of probation—immense difficulties in the Christian life, but *the* important thing is for parents to take care to teach their children that they are *not* children of the devil—according to the abominable Calvinistic heresy—but that, once baptized, they are the children of election; they are temples of the Holy Ghost; they have a *right* to the Kingdom of Heaven; they are the children of God, and that they ought to try and act accordingly, and if they only *will* to do so—I say will, not merely wish—they have abundant help from their Father.

We are bound further to teach our children, and to remember ourselves, that Baptism is a Sacrament of character. Character is an impress or mark. The head of the sovereign of the realm, on the coin of the realm, is a *character* on the coin. In Baptism, the soul is marked and marked for ever—for better for worse—as a child of God. It may be a bad child or it may be a good, but a child of God it is. Baptism can, therefore, never be repeated; hence the shocking sin of sacrilege in its repetition, especially among Romanists in England.

For ourselves, dear friends, let us remember that by this Sacrament we are made members of the Catholic Church, and parts of the Body of Christ; let us remember that we are placed among the faithful, that we have a right to the use of the other Sacraments, that this Sacrament is the *janua sacramentorum*, the door to the Sacraments, and that we ought in consequence more and more to consecrate ourselves to the service of God. Oh! life how miserable, if we forget our true position! Oh! life how blessed, if we realize the feelings of our relationship to our Father! for He has given us "the washing of Regeneration" in Baptism, as well as in Confirmation the "*renewing*" of the Holy Ghost.

SERMON XXIII.

The Sacrament of Confirmation.

“[One of] the principles of the doctrine of Christ [is] the laying on of hands.”—HEB. vi. 1.

SUCH is practically the meaning of this verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews, so far as it touches the question before us.

We have now to deal with what I may call the Sacrament of Confirmation. In writing of it, Anglican writers are sometimes in the habit of speaking of it as a “rite,” or a “Sacramental ordinance;” but it seems to me desirable that we should not use these watered-down expressions, which are somewhat meaningless, but call it what it is, a “Sacrament.” The reason why, probably, such forms of expression have been used is evident in a moment. Our part of the Catholic Church has desired to draw a distinction between *the* two great and essential Sacraments, viz. Baptism and the Holy Eucharist and the five lesser Sacraments. In doing so she follows primitive antiquity. Those two Sacraments are absolutely necessary to salvation for all Christians, where they may be had. The other five are by no means necessary in the same sense, though each has its own special and fitting place.

Then, again, the Anglican Church desired to emphasize

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the fact that our Lord Himself appointed the exact matter and form of the two great Sacraments while He was upon earth, and has left this on record in the Gospels.

This is apparently the reason why our Church has made a marked distinction between the two and the five. It ought, however, to be remembered that when our Church speaks of the two great Sacraments being "ordained by Christ Himself," she means just *that*, and nothing else; and, of course, she does *not* mean that the five Sacraments were not ordained by Christ, but only that He did not leave on record in the New Testament His statement of the *matter and form* of these, as He did of the two.

Every well-instructed Christian knows that those important matters ordained by the Apostles were really "ordained by Christ;" just as every Christian knows that the Apostles' Creed and the Creed of Nicæa are the revelations of the will of God to His people. Our Lord promised to be with His Apostles, and with His Church, to the end; He promised that His Spirit should guide them into all truth. Of course, not even an Apostle would dare to ordain a Sacrament of his own mere will; it is God alone that can unite the power of conveying grace with such material things as He may choose for the channels of doing so. Apostles were "stewards of the mysteries;" they were not authors of Sacraments. The New Testament calls our attention to *all* the seven Sacraments, so that we may be quite sure that *all* were in a very real sense "ordained by Christ Himself;" though, as I have said, it pleased our Lord to settle precisely both matter and form, and to leave that settlement on record in the Gospels, of the first two

Sacraments, because of their immense importance, whilst leaving a certain freedom of detail to the Apostles and the Church as to the other five, which yet He had, in their main provisions, Himself "ordained."

Whatever may be said as to others of these Sacraments, which we are not concerned with at the moment, there is one thing certain to every believer in Scripture, that as to *this* Sacrament which we have now under consideration, it is of very high importance. We should keep before us God's teaching in the text, that the Sacrament of Confirmation, or the laying-on of hands, is a Sacrament of such seriousness that it is one of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ."

I.

It may be well, my friends, to call attention here to two points.

(1) Think of the importance of *principles*. They are not everything, but they are the basis of everything; they are truths involving duties which cannot change. They are like the lofty mountains, which may be obscured for the moment, or blurred by the clouds, but which stand impregnable, and whose peaks rise from time to time above the murky atmosphere, and show us in what direction to guide our steps. They are like the stars in the nightly sky, which may seem, to an eye on shipboard, to move with the motion of the vessel, or to be obscured from time to time by the falling fog or the travelling clouds, but which emerge again, giving much guidance to the sailor on the open sea. There are moral principles; there are spiritual principles; there are principles of the religious life and action of the

Church; and of these latter is the Sacrament of Confirmation,—of high importance, therefore, for us all to understand and use.

(2) It is well for us, again, to consider how it comes before us in other parts of Holy Scripture as well as in the teaching of the text. We read¹ that St. Philip the deacon carried on a mission with some success in Samaria; that he was the means of the conversion of a considerable number to the faith of the Church; and that these he baptized; further, that St. Peter and St. John were sent for from Jerusalem, that they might administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, and that through that ministration the baptized converts might receive the special gift of the Holy Ghost, given through that Sacrament. From this we learn—even if we are reading the New Testament without the teaching of the Church of Christ to guide us—(1) that the Sacrament of Confirmation was considered by the Apostles of very grave importance; (2) that it was a Sacrament, because it had an outward sign, to which was joined by God an inward gift of grace; (3) that it seemed good to the Apostles—who, we know, were guided by Christ—that the administration of it should be restrained to the chief ministers of the Church, or, as we call them now, Bishops.

II.

Confirmation, then, according to the teaching of the Bible, and the belief therefore, of course, of the Church, is a Sacrament which is the appointed means of giving certain special gifts of the Holy Ghost to a soul which

¹ Acts viii. 17.

has been baptized into Christ, and made a temple of the indwelling Spirit, and a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of heaven."

According to some more modern conceptions, the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the soul until it has received the grace of Confirmation. This, however, would appear to be a grave mistake. To be made a "member of Christ" is to be made partaker of the Spirit of Christ. There is nothing of any weight in the idea that the Holy Ghost was not given in Baptism as an indwelling power, because the Laying-on of hands was for the purpose of "receiving the Holy Ghost," and for this reason—to our Lord Himself *alone* was the Holy Spirit given in His manhood "without measure." To all others that Blessed Spirit is given in different "measure." In Baptism He is given to make the soul united with Christ, and therefore to dwell in the soul as the Spirit of Christ. In Confirmation He is given to bring to the soul additional and important gifts needed for it, for its special circumstances and trials, just as in Ordination He is given to the soul set apart for a particular work, to convey gifts and power for that work. He *begins* the work of sanctifying grace by dwelling in the soul through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. To those to whom He comes through Confirmation, He gives further gifts, to continue and advance that work. It is for this reason that Confirmation has sometimes been called the "Sacrament of Increase," and "the complement, or filling up, of Baptism;" they who do not receive this Sacrament are certainly "under loss," as not receiving those especial gifts which the Holy Spirit offers to give through that Sacrament; and it is sad to think of any wilfully missing any grace or gift

of God—but, if duly baptized, they have received the Holy Ghost, making them His own temples in which He dwells, and making them “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Thus we see the great importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation, as a “principle of the doctrine of Christ,” and we do not derogate from the unique dignity of Holy Baptism, as appointed directly by our Lord Himself.

III.

There is a certain analogy, as it has ever been felt in the Church, between the actions of Almighty God in nature, and His actions in grace. In nature, a child receives life; it is necessary that means should be taken to strengthen that life; and also that there should be proper and regular food, and, in case of illness, medicine to assist to the restoration of health. So with the soul: in Holy Baptism supernatural life is given; in Confirmation it is increased and established, while by means of prayer and other Sacraments the grace necessary for the rest is supplied by God.

The next question of interest with regard to this Sacrament is the question of *matter* and *form*. There can be no doubt, from Holy Scripture and the records of the Holy Church, that the *matter*, from the very beginning, was the laying-on of hands. It is also true that in early times to this was added, as an appropriate and significant ceremony, the anointing with oil, or *unction*, or *chrism*, just as this was added in Holy Baptism. The reason seems to have been that oil has ever been considered a symbol of the Holy Ghost. Roman theologians in

modern times have taught, apparently, for the most part, that the unction or chrism is the essential matter of the Sacrament; others of their theologians, however, have maintained the true and primitive view, the truth of which is evident from Holy Scripture, that the essential matter consists in the laying-on of the hands of the Bishop on those who have already been baptized, significant of the further descent of the Holy Spirit upon them with the appropriate gifts. Even those who have felt most strongly about the *unction* or *chrism* would not deem it right that the laying-on of hands should be omitted. The fact is, however, I repeat, that, however beautiful and appropriate the ceremony of administering the chrism may be, the real and essential *matter* of the Sacrament is the laying-on of hands. It is well known that this Sacrament has had various names. *The* name is, of course, that which occurs in the text; but it is also called the Sacrament of Sealing, or the Seal of the Lord, and is probably alluded to under this name in various passages in Holy Scripture,¹ and the name is preserved in the Eastern Church. In the Western Church the name Confirmation has been commonly used since the days of St. Ambrose. This name is indeed appropriate, as this is the Sacrament of *strength*, as Baptism is the Sacrament of life. There may be doubts as to the validity, or at least the regularity, of the manner in which this Sacrament has been administered in the Roman Church, for the imposition of hands, which was, as we know without doubt, the *matter* of the Sacrament in Apostolic times, has been, in the strict sense of the term, constantly omitted in

¹ Eph. i. 13, 14; iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 19; cf. also St. John vi. 27.

that Church, where the Bishop's hands have been raised in an attitude of blessing, not laid on the heads of those to be confirmed.

As to the *form* of the Sacrament, that has not been fixed with the precision with which our Lord has fixed the form of the two great Sacraments. It has been left to the Church to arrange according to circumstances, and consists in some prayer offered by the Bishop for the giving of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

IV.

It may here be useful to point out, dear friends, the interior and spiritual relation between the Sacrament of Baptism and that of Confirmation.

I may illustrate this in the following way. In the Church of the Franciscans, in Innsbruck, is the celebrated tomb of the Emperor Maximilian. Around the recumbent figure of the emperor are splendid statues in bronze of remarkable sovereigns. These are not recumbent, but—unlike most, perhaps any other tomb—they *stand* prepared to do battle and guard the body of the kaiser.

This gives us a dim illustration, perhaps, of the state of the baptized soul. In Holy Baptism the Blessed Spirit of God is given to the soul. To the humanity of our Lord alone was He given "without measure." To the baptized soul He is given in such measure as to produce union with Christ, "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," and especially to implant the seeds of the three great theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity. Virtue, as we know, is a form of manly strength. These three virtues are called "theological," because by them the soul is knit to God. As the

young life goes on, they develop under the influence of the actual grace which comes with prayer, Christian training, and efforts to do right. As life advances towards those years when the power of the world, and the force of passion, and the temptations from the evil one, are stronger and more keenly felt, these virtues need reinforcement and protection, lest they suffer and die. The Holy Spirit of God comes in such measure through the Sacrament of Confirmation as to give that necessary re-enforcement and protection. The seven gifts are those protecting warriors who guard the virtues of the soul. Thus the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, extend their protection to faith. The dangers to the great and necessary virtue of hope are mainly twofold, viz. despondency or despair, and presumption. These are met and withstood by the two priceless gifts which protect the Christian's hope, viz. ghostly strength and holy fear. The noblest of all the virtues, as we know from the teaching of Scripture, especially St. Paul and St. John, is Divine love, or charity; and this is protected by the blessed gift of true godliness, that gift which enables the soul to "taste and see that the Lord is gracious," to enter into the sweetness of God's goodness, and to exercise the spirit of trust which comes from realizing the adoption of sons. St. John, thinking of this, says, "See with what love the Father hath loved us, that we are become the sons of God;" and again, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, though we know that . . . we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." These seem to be the main features of that gift of the Holy Ghost which is given to us in this Sacrament.

It is further to be remembered, dear friends, that the

Sacrament of Confirmation, like that of Baptism, is what is called a Sacrament of *character*. By each of these Sacraments the soul is marked in a special way. That mark can never be effaced; the character so given remains to our great glory or our great shame. In Holy Baptism the soul receives the *character* of a child of God; it may prove to be a good child or a bad child, but a child of God it is henceforth. In Confirmation it receives the *character* of a soldier of Christ, whether a faithful combatant afterwards or a traitor. It is for this reason that neither of these Sacraments can ever be repeated without sacrilege.

V.

Our own Order of Confirmation, as we use it now, was settled in 1661. It practically consists of two parts: (1) the renewal of Baptismal vows; and (2) the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation itself. The opening address, which we now have, was originally part of a rubric coming before the service. In that address there is the phrase "*ratify and confirm*," which has unfortunately led to some serious misunderstandings. It formerly stood in the rubric "*ratify and confess*," but was altered in the Prayer-book of 1552. There was an uncomfortable tendency at the time to multiply exhortations in the Prayer-book, and—one may say without disrespect—to indulge in unnecessary antitheses and synonymous expressions. Thus: we have "*erred and strayed*," when the one expression would have done perfectly well; and again, "*pray and beseech*;" and again, "*pardoneth and absolveth*," and so on. It was an unfortunate habit and in bad taste, and has given a

kind of stilted sound to some of our Offices in modern times, which we cannot but regret.

In this case it was more serious, because uninstructed persons got into the way of thinking, in the dead times of the early part of this century, that the candidate was himself *confirming* instead of being confirmed. The expression is merely a somewhat objectionable redundancy. The early part of the service is otherwise a very suitable renewal of baptismal vows.

Our service for the Sacrament itself really begins where the Bishop says, "Our help is in the Name of the Lord." The unction or chrism was abandoned in 1549, and the sign of the Cross in the bad times of 1552. Nevertheless, the use of the sign of the Cross lived on long afterwards, as it has been spoken of and defended certainly as late as 1619, and is stated, by an eminent English theologian, to be left for use according to the discretion of the Bishop, just as the sacred sign ought now to be used by pious Christians according to their discretion on various occasions.

It is in many ways to be regretted that the chrism and the sign of the Cross were omitted from their authoritative place in the Order for Administering the Sacrament, but we must remember that this was done with a charitable intention, and that by some men, such as Bishop Cosin, who strongly held the faith, for the purpose of meeting the scruples of weak consciences or foolish and captious persons. How far such concessions were wise we need not now discuss; the important point is that the Sacrament was preserved in its integrity with the scriptural and primitive *matter*—the laying-on of hands; and with the *form*, viz. the prayer of the Bishop for a renewed measure of the Holy Spirit—

already given in Baptism for life—to give strength by the sevenfold gifts. Whatever other ceremonies we may desire as being picturesque or edifying, at least we have the administration of the Sacrament as it comes to us from Apostolic times.

VI.

I must now speak to you, dear friends, of the *effects* of this Sacrament.

(1) I have already pointed out that it imprints a *character*, a mark, upon the soul, so that now the child of God, in whom the Holy Spirit has dwelt to unite him to Christ, becomes, by this further indwelling and gift, a soldier of Christ, that he is sealed as such.

(2) Again, from what we have said, you will have gathered that there is a richer abundance of gifts given in this Sacrament. The Holy Spirit is, indeed, given in one sense or another in all Sacraments. Without Him there is no life whatever. He is “the Lord and Giver of life,” but the same effects are not produced by Him in all Sacraments. We are bound not to be vague and careless about God’s revelations, but to expect God’s particular gifts precisely where He places them. The Holy Spirit varies the effects of His work according to the nature of the Sacraments, and as He makes us “new-born babes in Christ” in Holy Baptism, so all that is needed for spiritual manhood or womanhood comes to us in Confirmation. I have said to you before, and I beg you to remember, that only to the Divine humanity of our Blessed Saviour was the Holy Spirit given “without measure.” Through Christ He is given to our souls “by measure” from the first in Baptism, and then in other

Sacraments according to our needs. The Church has always felt that if the grace of Confirmation is rightly used, there is thereby a certain manliness and robustness in the Christian soul, enabling it to be strong, to be faithful to the faith, to be exactly obedient to the revelations which God has given by His Church, to have the courage to confess Jesus Christ, in fact, both in word and deed, and to persevere in a strong and manly grip of the Catholic Faith.

We are all familiar, indeed, with the objection made to God's sacramental ordinances, viz. that persons are to be found baptized and confirmed who do not correspond to these things. A moment's thought shows us how futile such objections are. We are not machines; we have living wills; we are endowed with that characteristic and unique prerogative of choosing as we please. Sacraments are not charms; they are "means of grace" and powers of assistance, but they do not, of course, compel our wills. By the exercise of faithfulness we are bound to "stir up within us the gift that has been given to us." What God does is to give the power; what we have to do is to use it.

VII.

From all this there follow certain practical thoughts. It has been distinctly laid down by our Church in her canons that Confirmations should be administered in different churches at least every three years; and we find that it is also enjoined, both by another of the canons, and by the rubrics at the end of the Catechism, and by the close of the Baptismal Service, that children are to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed as soon as they

have reached an age of intelligence. No age is actually fixed by the Church of England, but one of the canons commands all baptized persons to become communicants before the age of sixteen. From all which it is evident that the Church expects all to be confirmed by about the age of twelve or thirteen, at any rate. It would appear to common sense that the age must vary according to individual character. In some parts of the Catholic Church Confirmation has followed immediately after Baptism, so that infants have been confirmed; but there has been a general feeling, especially in the Western Church, that there is a wisdom in postponing Confirmation until the child is able in some measure to understand the greatness of the gift. Two dangers, of course, have to be avoided: (1) the danger of hurrying the administration of the Sacrament on too quickly, and thereby, perhaps, missing something of the benefit in an intelligent grasp of the meaning of the great gifts; (2) and, on the other hand, the delaying it so long that the soul is needlessly deprived of that armour of God which is so necessary for it in the increased temptations of opening manhood or womanhood.

On the whole, then, the Church seems to feel that those who are presented to receive this Sacrament should have sufficient discernment to understand the blessing offered and the danger of profanation, and to have their minds clear enough on religious subjects to be able to have a thorough repentance and make a good confession beforehand, seeing that this Sacrament is meant to increase grace; that it is what is called, not a "Sacrament of the Dead," but a "Sacrament of the Living."

It has also been felt that thorough instruction in the

main things of the Catholic Faith should be given to those who are about to be confirmed, and indeed, among the minor benefits of Confirmation, and yet a very real benefit among ourselves, they give an opportunity to a faithful Priest of instructing the young thoroughly in "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health"—which he may never have again.

In conclusion, dear friends, let us remember what a wonderful and glorious thing it is to have been made "temples of the Holy Ghost," indwelt by the Blessed Spirit, and united with Christ our Lord in Holy Baptism; how further wonderful and blessed it is to feel that that Holy Spirit has come to us in fresh measure and for fuller purpose in Confirmation, to give us the gifts which our souls need, and, above all things, to prepare us henceforth for the immense blessing of feeding upon the Body and Blood of the Lord—for the salvation of soul and body—until we die.

Surely from this we learn one or two important things. We learn, in the first place, self-respect—the great sacredness of the human body and of the human soul. We are princes; we are sons of the great King. We cannot afford to demean ourselves to the level of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, as if we were nobodies. *Noblesse oblige*, the very dignity of our position, and the greatness of the powers that we hold within us, teach us to try, notwithstanding all our weakness, to do that which is above all so necessary to try day by day—to be growing better. We are pupils in the school of the science of goodness—the greatest, the most splendid of all sciences—and the powers to use our opportunities

are given to us. Surely, then, we must stir ourselves to exert those powers.

And then, again, are we not reminded of how needful it is for us not to "grieve," much less to quench, the Spirit of God Who dwelleth in us? That Blessed Spirit sanctifies all our joys and all our sorrows, and all the sweet relationships of life—keeping them, if we will, without taint of sin. Let us listen to His voice and follow His guidance.

And then, again, we know, if we are faithful, what that comes to. It means that, on the one hand, it is our *duty* to be strong. We can be, if we will. We must not allow mere flimsy *wishes*. We must exercise a stalwart will. Strength is a duty, and though they that are against us may be and are powerful, they are nothing like so many or so powerful as those who are on our part.

And, on the other hand, it means that, gradually but surely, moulded by the hands of the great Artist, we are being formed into that for which we were created—formed into the likeness, into the image, of Jesus Christ. "To know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings," to "be conformed to His death, so that we may enter into His Resurrection-glory," was the prayer of the great Apostle, and the powers which he had for this attainment are also placed at our disposal. Let us take care to use them, and let it be the practical prayer of our lives: "Teach me to do the thing which pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God: let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness."

SERMON XXIV.

The Sacrament of Order.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—ST. MATT. xxviii. 18-20.

"As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—ST. JOHN xx. 21-23.

"This is My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me" (or, "offer this as My memorial before the Father").—ST. LUKE xxii. 19.

"He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."—ST. LUKE x. 16.

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."—ST. MATT. x. 40.

"How shall they preach, except they be sent."—ROM. x. 15.

"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."—2 TIM. ii. 2.

"Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands."—2 TIM. i. 6.

It is thus that our Lord and His Apostles speak of the institution and solemn position of the Sacrament of Order.

This Sacrament is, of course, "not generally necessary to salvation," in such sense that *every* person has to receive it, but it is necessary to salvation in such

sense as, that, without it, important Sacraments, and especially the most important of all, cannot be administered. Our Lord established it in order to give the necessary power to His ministers for doing His work on earth, for teaching the Faith and advancing spiritual things; for guiding on the path to salvation; for administering the other Sacraments, and for offering the Holy Sacrifice of His body and blood before the Father. In one sense, therefore, it is the most important of all, because it is the source and foundation, in the regulated arrangements of the Church on earth, of all the others.

I

This Sacrament is called the Sacrament of Order, for by the word Order is signified a regulated arrangement of persons or things in various grades, which correspond with one another. God is a God of order. In the inanimate creation everything follows regulated arrangement. This is why the Greeks gave to the Universe the title of Κοσμὸς, which means simply, Order. It is only through the sinful will of fallen creatures that God's moral order has been disturbed. The great work of the Church of Christ is to restore that order, and thus this name is given to that Sacrament, which impresses on the soul a mark or *character* that can never be effaced, so that *that* soul is irrevocably consecrated to God for a special office, and is placed in one of those several degrees of official duty, in which there is a regulated subordination of rank and function.

Of these degrees, many inferior or introductory ones have been used at different times in different parts of

the Catholic Church, but three alone are necessary, and of Divine appointment.

Of these three, there are three important considerations which ought to be borne in mind:—(1) In the New Testament mention is made of these orders under varying names. Sometimes they are called—to translate them into English—apostles, elders or presbyters (that is, priests), and deacons; sometimes apostles, overseers (that is, bishops), and ministers; sometimes angels, presbyters or overseers, and deacons or ministers. The *names* given varied at first; the *orders* were always three. From the special dignity assigned to those members of the highest order, who had been companions of, or in close touch with, our Lord, the title Apostle was kept for them, and after their time another title was given to the highest order; that title was what we translate Bishop. The second order was known under the title of presbyter or priest—the title Priest, and its equivalents in other languages, being used by the Church to make it clear that the office in question represented the power of offering Sacrifice. The third order came to be designated universally by the title Deacon. It is worthy of notice, too, that our Lord, in his own Person, bore all three titles. He is called “the Bishop of your souls” (1 Pet. ii. 25); He is called “the High Priest of our profession” (Heb. iii. 1); He is called “a Minister (or Deacon) of the Sanctuary” (Heb. viii. 2). No Church can be a truly organized part of the Catholic Church which does not possess these three orders of ministers. A departure from these is unfaithfulness to Holy Scripture, and to the Divinely regulated order of the Church.

(2) These orders can only be transmitted by *succession*,

through the Apostles, from Jesus Christ, Who received from the Father power to give them. Indeed we do not know any way, but the way of *succession* of some kind, for handing on offices or prerogatives. In natural things the holders of authority do not *take* that authority to themselves, but have it committed to them by their superiors, or by those who have gone before them. People do not create themselves magistrates or officers in a State; children do not choose in what family they are to be born. There is no known way of giving place and prerogative among men, except by *succession* of some sort.

In the Aaronic priesthood of God's early Church, the succession was by *natural* birth; the son succeeded the father to the priestly office. In the new dispensation, since Christ came in person to bring realities instead of shadows, the succession became, of course, *supernatural*, and the Sacrament of Order is the Divinely appointed means, instituted by our Lord, for handing on this supernatural succession.

(3) It is to be noted also, that the great object of this is the bringing the Priesthood of Christ into close working activity upon His Body, the Church, through the power of the Holy Ghost. In a certain sense, even the Deacon has a share in the priestly power of Christ, and in a lesser but *real* degree, the baptized and *confirmed* layman. It is for this reason that laymen, of course, offer spiritual sacrifices of prayer, and take a real share, with the appointed priesthood, in the offering of the great Sacrifice of the Altar, in union with the Sacrifice of the Cross, but the formal Priesthood of Christ exists in the two higher orders of ministry. The Priest can do for the Church all that the Deacon can do; but, besides

that, his special functions are to act as a representative of, and in the power of Jesus Christ, for the absolving of sinners who are penitent, for the instructing of, and praying for, souls—for the Priest, above all things, must be a man of prayer;—for the ministering to the flock of Christ as “a good shepherd,” for the giving of God’s blessing to God’s people, or, as the Bible calls it, putting “My Name upon them,” and, above all, for “showing the Lord’s death till He come,” before the Father, by offering the Sacrifice of the Altar, and giving the Communion of the Body and Blood to the children of God.

But the absolute *plenitude* of the priesthood dwells in the Bishop. He is enabled to exercise all the functions belonging to the Deacon and the Priest; but besides these, the Church—under the guidance of the Holy Ghost—has restrained to him the Sacraments which *require* the laying on of hands, viz. Confirmation, which has been called the Ordination of the laity, and Ordination, in which are given the various gifts of the ministry. What is necessary in order to give this Sacrament, is the laying on of hands, together with some prayer and authoritative statement suitable to the office given.

The effects of this Sacrament are, first of all, that, like Baptism and Confirmation, it produces on the soul a spiritual mark or *character*, which can never be effaced. It separates the man who receives it, so that he is set apart to be a minister of God. Again, the Sacrament gives power to perform certain sacred functions. Of course, these functions cannot be performed by any one who has not received the Sacrament of Order, and in this, as in all supernatural things, there is an analogy with the ordinary arrangements of everyday life; for, in civil society, there are certain duties and

functions which cannot be performed indiscriminately, but can only be executed by those who are invested with the power by public authority. This power comes, of course, from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great High-priest, and who sends others, as He tells us Himself, as He was sent by the Father.

But, further, the Sacrament of Order conveys a special grace to assist the man who receives that Sacrament, not only to perform his functions in a manner that is *valid*, but also to do them in an earnest and religious spirit, assisting thus in the sanctification of his own soul, as well as in that of the souls of others. Like other graces to be received in fulness, there are required in the receiver, proper preparation and right dispositions; and it is necessary for the full effect of the grace given, that it should be, what St. Paul calls, "stirred up" by the Will of him who receives it, with God's assistance, from time to time. Thus, all Priests and all Bishops—even if they are wicked—when once validly ordained or consecrated—are able to administer valid Sacraments. They have received the *character* and *power*, but they have not necessarily received rightly the *grace*, or are not using it; so that they—to their own grave loss—may be administering Sacraments which are blessings to others who receive them properly, whilst *they* are not helping on the sanctification of their own souls, but quite the contrary.

A Deacon, then, when he is approaching the Sacrament of Order to receive the grace of the Priesthood, should be watchful and earnest in having the right dispositions for receiving so great a gift: (1) He should be in earnest as to his self-examination and repentance. Repentance and faith are, indeed, as always, the true

dispositions for approaching any *gift* of Christ. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him;" and repentance is that manly sorrow which *may* touch the feelings, but certainly touches the Will whereby a man, fascinated by the goodness and beauty of Christ, contrasts this with his own shortcomings and the treacheries of his Will, and is deeply and manfully sorry; whereby he honestly confesses his sins with courage and truth, above all, whereby his Will is firmly set to a real amendment of life, and a thorough breaking with any known sin: (2) The Deacon approaching the Priesthood must be humbly and honestly convinced of the reality of *vocation*. We are reminded by the great teachers of the Church that *vocation* or "call" is conditioned by the inner voice of God to the conscience, *and* the outward circumstances of life—the advice of parents, the general trend of matters, the habitual intention to help in the work of the Church, and so on; readiness for work; sense of the value of prayer; quiet unobtrusive faithfulness in fulfilling the duties of an ordinary Christian life.

II.

The Sacrament of Order is thus, as it ought to be, a subject of interest to *all* Christians.

The Ember days, appointed by the Church for fasting and prayer before the times of ordination, are meant to remind *all* of their duty. All Christians, at these times especially, but, indeed, always, should pray for their Priests.

There is a great duty, also, which lies upon parents. Christ needs the best, the noblest, the strongest of His servants for the ministry. Early in life, parents should

let it be put before the minds of their sons—the splendid opportunity of serving God which is offered to them in the Priesthood. The sneers of the world, and the wild rush, in these times, for material advantage, may well be terrible temptations for a soul, who is *called*,—to overcome; still the noblest calling in this world is the calling of a Priest; and Christ needs *men*, and brave men, to fight His battles, and we are bound to let our sons understand that no calling demands such manliness, devotion, courage, and self-sacrifice, as the calling of a Priest.

III.

For, indeed, there is a special dignity attaching to this Sacrament. In the case of other Sacraments, the effects and consequences have their end and limitation in those who receive them. In the case of *this* Sacrament, it extends in its effects to the whole Church.

For without this Sacrament we cannot have *the* Sacrament—the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Those who have cut themselves off from the Church, have no longer the Real Presence of our Blessed Lord's Body and Blood in His Sacrament. Where they act in good faith, indeed; and in ignorance or prejudice, and through no fault of their own, have set up a ministry without Apostolic succession, and apart from the commands of Christ,—we may be sure that God, who is all merciful, will give them help and blessing; but they have no appointed ministry, no true Sacraments, no security of the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood under the form of bread and wine.

IV.

It is well, perhaps, to consider the duty of Priests in their relation to society and in their inner lives.

In the Priesthood of the English Church, there is this advantage. Her Priests do not belong to a *caste*, as there is some danger that the Priests of another part of the Catholic Church do. They are members of a society. They are frequently married men, with homes and families, like other Englishmen. They are citizens, like other citizens, with civil rights and civil enthusiasms; and there are blessings from this, and also there are temptations. The danger to the English Priesthood is, doubtless, the danger of secularity; while the blessings to the English Priesthood are a deeper appreciation of the ordinary lives and trials of ordinary men, and a more entire sympathy, founded upon experience, with their temptations and sorrows.

Everything must depend, then, upon the inner life of the Priest. He has upon him very frequently a double burden, though it may bring a double blessing. He has frequently to discharge the duties of a husband, of a father, of a member of ordinary society; *and* he has also to discharge the duties—if he be a true man—of a Priest. His safety lies, not, indeed, in neglecting the obvious duties of ordinary life, but in seeing to it, that, whilst these are properly discharged, he never forgets his higher calling, and in order to that constant remembrance, takes even more care than every Christian must take, to keep alive and vigorous the life of prayer, of recollectedness of God's presence, of loving thoughts of and intercession for all souls for whom he is responsible,

and of stern watchfulness over his own motives and his own Will.

We live in days when there are constant attacks upon the Christian Faith. We live in days when there are violent and unfounded slanders against the Christian Priesthood. "Sacerdotalism" and "clericalism" are handy expressions in the mouth of the unbeliever or the worldling, to beg the question and to stir up prejudices against the ordinances of Christ, which are not popular with the "natural man." This is to be expected; this is to be borne with. This kind of thoughtless rudeness and abuse is one of the great proofs of the reality of the Catholic Priesthood in the English Church. The "world" and the newspaper never abuse the ministry of dissenting bodies; there is no reason for them to do so. There is nothing supernatural, there is nothing appointed by Christ in such ministry. The Catholic clergy they lose no opportunity of abusing; "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household:" "As I am, so are ye in this world." The grave duty of the clergy, therefore, is to see that their lives are in accordance with their great calling, and that, as in their Master's case, so in theirs, all this abuse and misrepresentation are undeserved.

V.

There have been efforts made from time to time to attack the Orders of the English Church. Strangely enough, some who profess not to believe in Orders at all allow themselves to speak with something like cynical contempt of our Orders; whilst, on the other hand, the

Roman Church has tried, in one way or another, to prove that they are invalid. To this there has of course been a great temptation. As English Orders are valid, and the English succession continuous from the Apostles' time, the Roman Church in this country occupies a schismatical position. In the earlier days of the controversy, ridiculous stories, such as the "Nag's Head" fable, were told by early Roman controversialists, but have been long abandoned by all serious theologians in the Roman Church. Quite recently the Holy See, inspired apparently by some English advisers among the Roman Catholic hierarchy in this country, made a feeble effort to discredit English Orders. The only effect of the ill-starred Bull on the subject was to discredit still further Papal authority. The two English Primates found it an easy task in their able Encyclical *Sæpius Officio* to disprove the baseless assertions of the Bull; and the ability and truth of the Encyclical has been since made more plain than ever by the necessity felt by Roman controversialists, who have tried to answer it, altogether to shift their ground.

Of the true succession in the line of the English Episcopate, and of the validity, therefore, of the acts of the English Priesthood, there can be no doubt whatever in the minds of those who are acquainted with the subject. We ought to be thankful as English Churchmen that it has pleased God through the storms and dangers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to preserve to our Church an Apostolic ministry.

Finally, it is our duty to be faithful in the use of that ministry, and to do all that in us lies to help towards raising and sustaining more and more the standard of life and teaching amongst those who are

called to so great a calling. Faithful Priests are needed much in the Anglican Church all over the world, and in days when the rush of life is so headlong for worldly success, all serious believers in the Church should do their best to kindle and keep alive real enthusiasm in the hearts of young men, of thoughtfulness and earnestness, for the noblest calling to which man can be called. Especial prayer for the clergy is a great duty on the part of devout lay people. We have to remember that every Sacrament is a means to an end, and that the Sacrament of Order is intended to bring home the powers of salvation which are given by and in our Master to all living souls; and to further the great object, that the kingdoms of this world may become "the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

SERMON XXV.

The Sacrament of Penitence.

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."—ST. MATT. ix. 6.

"As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them ; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—ST. JOHN xx. 21-23.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—ST. MATT. xxviii. 20.

It is thus that our Blessed Lord speaks of the mysterious power lodged in His Church for the forgiveness and cleansing of human sin. It is lodged there only because the Church is united with Himself, and this power has been given to Him, as He tells us, seeing that He is the Son of the Father as well as the Son of Man. This, in one form or another, is a subject of the deepest importance to us all ; for, after all is said and done, being members of the human race, we must describe ourselves as sinners, and our Lord came into the world pre-eminently to save sinners, and to take away the sins of men.

There is one thing which Scripture makes quite clear : it is this, that sin cannot be forgiven without penitence.

To those who have sinned, the path of penitence is the path of life. There have been those who have spoken as if there were no need for forgiveness of sin ;

and yet every soul, when at all aroused to religious thought, becomes more or less conscious of that need. Again, there are those who have spoken as though God might forgive sin without any penitence on the part of man; and yet that would seem to make God other than Himself, and to require that He should forget the moral independence of His creature. Anyhow, the Bible and the Church are strong and distinct upon the necessity of penitence for the forgiveness of sin.

I.

First of all, penitence most assuredly is a virtue; that is, it is a form of manly strength. This virtue at all times—so it would appear from Scripture—has been needful in the dealings of sinful man with an offended God. If any one at any time really turned to God from doing wrong, that meant that—however weak they might be and open to temptation—when wakening up to the wrong of their sin, they hated it, and had a firm purpose to try to do better. Indeed, however fallen the human soul may be, some of the most beautiful and sweetest things in it are connected with penitence. In the ordinary intercourse of common life, we—frail and fallen creatures—are sometimes carried away by gusts of passion, or emotion, or self-will. If the soul has any nobility in it, there comes the calmer moment when it is able to review its conduct and take the full measure of its meaning; and there comes the sad yet blessed moment when it sees things in their true light, and condemns itself accordingly, and is stricken with a noble sorrow. That sorrow gives strength to a sincere humility; and whatever measure of regret there may be

in it, it brings with it that vigour which enables the soul to be brave enough to undo, so far as may be possible, whatever wrong it has done. In true penitence there is nothing morbid and nothing sentimental, nothing maudlin, nothing cringing; but, on the contrary, the noble strength which comes from sincerity, and the awakening of a soul to realities, and to fresh loyalty to an injured or underrated love. Such states of soul are to be found in all truly noble lives apart from the more direct question of Religion.

And when we come to think at all truly of God our Father, such a state of soul becomes enlarged and intensified; more calm, and even (in a sense) permanent. The parent, or child, or friend, who wakens up to unworthy or faithless action towards one to whom much is owed, is led, in proportion to the nobility of character, to a sincere and manly sorrow, and a sorrow that leads to change of action. We ought never, however, to forget that our sweetest affections on earth are the gifts of Him Who is the Fountain of all affection, because He is Love; and by faith, if we cultivate intercourse with Him, we learn more and more to know *that* lasting and fruitful and manly sorrow, for doing violence in any sense to His goodness, Who is Goodness itself.

It is thus that the Christian Religion, when it is fully and rightly taught as in the Catholic Church, keeps us, so to speak, always on our knees. Scoffers have talked of this as cringing and cowardly, but they have not given themselves time to wait and think what it is that they mean. It is possible for the Christian to have the most perfect trust in God, and an ever-deepening love for Him, and yet to feel—or rather all the more to feel—his own unworthiness. If night by night and

morning by morning he "casts all his care upon Him," there is no care that he more constantly casts with more entire confidence than any other, and yet with a real loving sorrow, than his sense of sin—even when he is steadily trying to do right—when face to face with the Holiness of God. It is in this way that penitence is a real strength, and a real form of virtue; not only is it so in the Christian dispensation, but always has been in religious souls.

Of course it is deepened, and takes clearer form, from the revelation of God that is in Christ, but the virtue of penitence has always been an element in any real, true form of personal religion; that is, in any realization of the direct tie between the soul and its Creator. David's deep cry, when he woke up from the bewildering delusion of his sinful passion to a real sense of what he had done—"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight"—has been the predominant feeling of a religious soul awakened to its own sinfulness and God's goodness, has been in greater or less degree the kind of interior expression of the noble virtue of penitence.

II.

And then, of course, Penitence is a Sacrament. The Church of England has been careful to point out the difference in dignity between the two *great* Sacraments and the other five. The dignity of the two rests upon the fact, that in every detail of *form and matter* they are appointed by Christ Himself; that is, that with His own lips, as well as by His own example, our Lord Himself has told His Church precisely the necessary

matter and form of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Besides, these two Sacraments, we know, are universally necessary for salvation (where they may be had) in a way and to a degree in which it would appear that the others are not. The Church of England has never professed to be in herself infallible, or free from the possibility of mistake, except only in so far as she has handed on and expressed the teaching of the universal Church. We are not bound to think that every expression she has used, whether in the Articles or the Homilies on such a subject, is the best expression that could have been used; but we are sure of this, that her main teachings are the teachings of the Primitive and Catholic Church, and that in these matters of the Sacraments she is a safe guide.

With regard to the Sacrament of Penitence, we know that it is the chief method ordained for the remission of deadly sin. The Church of England, as, indeed, the Primitive Church and Holy Scripture, would seem to teach us that the use of this Sacrament depends upon the special needs of the soul. We may fairly put it in this way. To *all*, the Church would say, "You may;" to others she would say, "It would be better for you;" to others she would say, "You ought." Broadly speaking, she *never* says, "You must;" because it is one of her characteristics to recognize the free action of conscience and the "liberty that is in Christ." The strongest thing which our Church teaches us upon the subject is this: that she binds her Priests in visiting dying persons to "move" them to a "special confession of their sins, if they have any weighty matter" upon their minds. As deadly sin is always a "weighty matter" to a conscience properly aroused to facts, and especially at a

time when the soul is about to pass into the immediate presence of God, she must consider that a very large number of persons would be, to say the least of it, a great deal better for making their confession and receiving absolution before they die; and it may be fairly inferred that what to many—to so very many—would be a blessing at the time of death, ought to be used and practised when the faculties are fully awake and alive in the time of life.

That this Sacrament was abused at one time is very probable. Nothing that is Holy has not been abused by fallen man. The Bible, the Pulpit, the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, Prayer, Public Worship, Holy Matrimony, have all been grossly abused. *Usum non tollit abusus*, "Abuse does not take away use," is a wise saying. The danger of the modern Church of England has not been the *abuse* of this Sacrament, but its *neglect*.

It has been an unhappy thing to hear sometimes public teachers in the Church warning congregations against the dangers of Confession and Absolution, as though modern Church peoples were overcrowding the confessional, when, as a matter of fact, large numbers of them do not examine their consciences at all, have no idea even of the necessity of private confession to God, and never think of using, even though they have fallen into the most deadly sin, the Sacrament of Penance at all.

Some things, dear friends, to us are perfectly certain; that if we believe our Bibles, such words as those of the text cannot be explained away; that sin is a very grievous thing; that the Son of Man on earth hath power to forgive sins; that for forgiveness there is the need of the true spirit of repentance; and that Christ

"hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him;" that the exercise of that power has, by His appointment, been left with the Priests of His Church, as their office is only, in fact, a part of His own; and that each single soul in repentance for sin has always a *right*, sometimes a *need*, sometimes a *duty*, to make its confession and seek the absolution of Christ from the Priest of the Church, who is so far forth His representative.

There is something saddening and even absurd in the notion that our Lord in His Church will minister through His Priests to large congregations or multitudes, yet will not minister to them soul by soul. Our own part of the Catholic Church, which has rightly taken such pains to respect the rights of conscience, is quite distinct as to "the benefit of Absolution," and as to one fact, that "Absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sins."

Again, there are practical reasons why the use of the Sacrament of Penitence should be brought very distinctly before the minds especially of the young, in an age when, like this, the bands of discipline are so slack, when backbone is at a discount, so to speak, and when temptations are so strong. There are noble and excellent souls within our Church who, without the use of this Sacrament, have, by the mercy of God, conversion of heart, true horror and hatred of sin; in fact, that spirit of repentance which cannot be dispensed with even by God, without His ceasing to be God. But, on the other hand, there are many to whom the use of this Sacrament has been a training in strength and goodness, and a preservation from deadly falls; and many who, alas! from the want of the use of it, have

fallen into that easy-going and half-hearted religion, which too often ends in the loss of vigour of character, and even in the loss of the soul.

What we have to bear in mind is, that what God loves, that what is indeed required for salvation, is thorough truth and thorough repentance. The intentions, or seeds, or beginnings of these things are indeed implanted in the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. God, however, uses means for working out the completeness of these things, and among these means there is none more important, when rightly used, than the Sacrament of Repentance. To some natures, I grant, it may not be so, and that is precisely why the Church of England does not lay it down as absolutely necessary. To many natures, however, and especially—and I speak from experience—to the natures of *men*, this Sacrament is most useful.

I do not mean for a moment that it is not—like any gift of God—useful also to the souls of women, but this is to be remembered, (1) that women are naturally more reverent and more religious than men; (2) that very often, at least in sheltered homes and amongst good people, they are exposed to fewer of the *graver* temptations; (3) that by natural constitution they are ordinarily inclined to be more scrupulous and more introspective; that therefore—from the merely practical point of view—they do not need this Sacrament so much as men do. There are, of course, women who are exposed to grave temptations, and who have had terrible falls, and for them the use of this Sacrament has proved to be the very saving of the soul and the path of conversion.

To men it is very different. Just as they are less

naturally inclined to use this Sacrament, so it is a real blessing to them. Had the Church of England been less darkened by and overridden with Puritanism and all its various forms of superstition, had her Priests been more faithful and outspoken in this matter, more wise, more father-like, and gifted with more thoughtfulness and tact, many and many a young life which has been wrecked on the shoals of worldliness and passion, would have been guided through danger and disaster to a noble manhood, and to a real, deep, thoroughgoing, and not merely pretending or "respectable" Religion.

We have much to answer for, dear friends, believe me, in the cowardly and thoughtless neglect of this Sacrament for our boys and young men.

That is a practical way of putting the matter; but what we need to remember is, that whilst we have the fullest liberty of conscience as to *how* we use the ministrations of the Church, interior contrition, honest confession of sin, a true effort of amendment of life—in fact, conversion of heart to God by the grace of the Holy Spirit,—these are needed by us all, and the Sacrament of Repentance has its value in assisting to these, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III.

There are some popular objections made against the use of this Sacrament at which perhaps we may just glance.

(1) It is said, "By using this Sacrament, I put a man between my soul and God." In this there is an obvious fallacy. We do not put our parents between our souls and God, because through their instrumentality we

receive natural life, and by their teaching our minds are gradually opened to the knowledge of things. God alone is the ultimate Source of life; He alone is the Fountain of knowledge and intelligence: but He uses means to an end. We do not put our food between ourselves and God, and yet it is certain that our bodily life is not preserved by food in itself, but by God's blessing upon the proper use of it, according to the natural laws established by Him. We do not put a medical man between ourselves and God, when by his skill and knowledge we are relieved of pain or restored to health. God is the real Worker, but He uses means; the physician is the minister. Again, we do not put a man between our souls and God when we listen to the words of the preacher, and when by him we are converted, or comforted, or strengthened in doing right. It is God the Holy Ghost Who does this thing for us, but the preacher is His appointed minister and instrument. And in the same way, if we use the "ministry of reconciliation," by exercising our freedom in making use of the Sacrament of Penance, the Priest is not put between the soul and God, but is the appointed minister and instrument for bringing a special grace to the soul. The fact is, that whilst in one sense each soul stands entirely alone, in another sense we depend one upon another in a thousand ways, and the exercise of the Priest's office in the tribunal of Penance is entirely in accordance with the analogy of God's mode of working in other departments of our lives.

(2) It is objected again that this Sacrament has been misused. We need not dwell upon this, as we have touched upon it before. If everything in this sad world and in the Church—which in this world is in the throes

of her passion—which has been abused or misused were to be given up, there would be very little left. Everything—even in Religion—has been at one time or another abused or misused, and more especially the Bible and the pulpit; but the lesson that we learn from this is not, “Give it up,” but rather, “Use it properly.”

(3) The further chief objection is, “It destroys the sense of responsibility.”

This is an instance of entire confusion of thought. Responsibility is not at all destroyed where the various ways in which, from the necessities of the Divine constitution of human life, we depend upon one another are concerned; on the contrary, it is deepened. We feel more responsible in proportion as we waken up to our relationship to others, and to the part that each of us must play in the lives of those around us, as well as in our own.

In the confessional, the Priest's sense of responsibility is deepened by the knowledge that he is dealing for Christ directly with a soul, and he is much more likely to feel it than when preaching to multitudes. And one who makes his confession has *his* sense of responsibility deepened by the fact that he is not holding a mere conversation with a fellow-creature, however excellent or worthy, but using a very sacred and mysterious ministry of the Church, in special and awful nearness to Christ, and that therefore, so to speak, he must not “play with edged tools.” There is the further fact to remember, that the “seal of confession” is absolute; that a Priest must not directly or indirectly reveal anything that is said to him in confession. The Church has always been strong on this, and the English Church is also on this point strong and distinct. Thus the penitent feels that

he is really speaking to the heart of Christ, and leaving his sins with his Saviour. He is thereby filled with deeper gratitude than ever to that Saviour, and enabled to try again in the battle against sin with a more free and a more humble spirit, and with a deeper sense of responsibility.

Some good men, no doubt, have made objections through—it seems to me—an insufficient sense of the seriousness and importance of any Sacrament appointed by the Church, and therefore appointed by Christ, even though it be not absolutely necessary to salvation, and at the same time from a nervous dread of abuse of this Sacrament. But the main popular objections come from the corrupt heart of fallen man. Our natural pride leads us to dislike humiliation, and our natural laziness in things of religion leads us to dislike effort; and the use of the Sacrament of Penance implies courage, effort, and some measure of humility. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter in.”

IV.

As to the form and matter of the Sacrament, there is little to be said. The *matter* is, indeed, a contrite state of heart; the *form* has more or less varied. The words of absolution have been different in different parts of the Church: in the English Church they are the most strong and distinct that have anywhere been used.

Our part of the Catholic Church indeed in this, as in other points, allows great freedom. In some parts of the Catholic Church the jurisdiction has been allowed, which gave a power to *compel* persons “to submit to the discipline of the Church by making confession as the

Church appoints, and in the actual discipline established by the Council of Lateran yearly." This kind of jurisdiction the English Church does not allow. She leaves it free to her children to confess or not as they please; to choose their own confessor, not necessarily to go to the parish Priest.

And she gives to her Priests the other kind of jurisdiction, namely, the power to absolve those who come to them for confession, as *inherent* in their office by their ordination. The Priest in the English part of the Catholic Church is not obliged to apply to his Bishop for a licence to absolve a soul who willingly comes to him for confession. The English Church *does* require that "when any such persons, as are of riper years, are to be baptized, timely notice shall be given to the Bishop," but she gives no direction that her Priests should apply to the Bishop as to their use as to the Power of the Keys; that, without restriction, she has committed to her Priests as inherent in their Priestly office. "It is," as has been truly said, "a delegation by the laws of the Church to all Priests, to receive those who come to them for this office, to receive the benefit of Absolution before Holy Communion." It is entirely an arrangement of the modern Roman Church, the seeking of a licence from a Bishop for the exercise of this ministry. No licence was required before the Council of Trent; no leave had to be asked either of the parish Priest or of any individual Bishop. According to the teaching of the Church of England, then, no Priest has a right to *compel* any one to use this Sacrament; he has a right and a duty to exercise this ministry for any one who voluntarily applies to him; and the parish Priest is bound to suggest, and even urge the sick and dying to the use of this

Sacrament; though even then, when he has done his duty, the penitent has a right to follow the advice or not, as his conscience may guide him, and if he makes his confession, to choose for himself to whom he shall make it.

It has been sometimes asserted that the notorious neglect of English Priests to teach the people on this subject, and the notorious and unhappy neglect of the people, show that it is not the purpose of the Church of England that it should be used. The answer to this, of course, is obvious. Neglect of the law of the Church is no proof that it is *not* the law of the Church; it is only a proof of the indifference, or ignorance, or carelessness—in times of coldness—of many of the Bishops and clergy and people. Thank God, those times of coldness have to a great extent passed away, and the truest, bravest, and most manly sons of the Church use this ministry. But, of course, like every forgotten truth or duty which has been revived, it is spoken against by the ignorant or prejudiced, or by those who hate the supernatural, and who do not value the powers which Christ has placed in His Church.

V.

It remains to remind you that the use of a Sacrament is only a part of that wider and deeper thing—Repentance. Of that there may be said to be three parts.

(1) Sorrow for sin, when the heart is turned by a longing for righteousness—that is, in fact, by love for God—from evil ways. Wise self-examination is, of course, an excellent exercise for deepening sorrow for sin; but it is not a mere “numbering of our sins” that we want,

but a knowledge of our sinful condition and a noble sorrow for it.

(2) And the second part may be said to be acknowledgment of sin, or Confession. There is a desire in the soul, when it turns away from and hates the ways of darkness, fearlessly to bring its sins to light before God. Certainly and always in confession to Him, and with the use of this Sacrament, where God the Holy Ghost guides the soul to use it. "If we walk in the light," says St. John, probably alluding to the penitential discipline of the Church—"if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *we have fellowship one with another*, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

(3) Then the third part is a thorough good *intention* to amend what is wrong. Being human and frail, and subjected to temptation, the amendment may not be completed and *perfected* without many and many an effort, and many and many a confession; but by the grace of God the *intention* may be perfect and sincere; there may be, in fact, what our Lord desires, "the honest and good heart."

There are certain marks or signs of true penitence and a good intention which it may be worth our while to remember.

(1) It leads us to avoid with promptitude the ordinary causes and occasions which have led us, we know, to sin. We are learning to hate sin, if we are attentive in drying up the sources of it. An invalid is evidently desirous of being cured, when he gives up things that he likes, but which he knows to be bad for his health.

(2) Another mark is this—the willingness promptly to undo, as far as may be, any evil effects that have come

from sin. If people, for example, have lost their tempers, and injured others' characters, or given them pain, when sincerely penitent they are ready to acknowledge this, and to repair the injury as far as possible. If people have been hurried into saying what is not quite true, when penitent they are willing, courageously, to unsay it, unless the unsaying is likely to do harm, and in that case they humiliate themselves more before God, and learn to be more watchful in future.

(3) A third mark is this—the willingness to take pains at once, to use the necessary remedies against sin, to embrace fearlessly the means and ways by which sin may be cured. For instance, more regular prayer, or regular meditation, or devout reading of Scripture and of holy books, or more frequent attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, or certain necessary acts of self-denial. These things, indeed, are always important for a devout life, but there are some that may be more especially important, in particular cases, in relation to particular sins.

VI.

We do well to remember, also, some of the effects of the receiving of this Sacrament rightly.

(1) All the sins with which the conscience is burdened and the life oppressed are perfectly forgiven. We are freed then and there from the bonds of sin which had been binding us, freed from slavery and brought back to the liberty that is in Christ Jesus. The true penitent is then and there entirely absolved.

(2) But God does more for us in this Sacrament, than merely forgive our sins. He is "able to do more

than we can ask or think." He gives us the greatest gift He can give, viz. sanctifying or habitual grace. This replaces in the soul a likeness to God Himself: by this, as the Apostle says, "we are partakers of the Divine nature."

(3) And from this follows a perfect renewal of friendship and peace with God; and with this, a renewal of our childlike relation to God. "See," says St. John, "with what love the Father hath loved us, that we should be called the sons of God." Hence it is that the merits of good works done are restored to us, and that we are rendered capable of doing meritorious actions. Men have been sometimes afraid to recognize this, lest they should seem to put their own merits in place of our Lord, and so they have been led to unreal statements as to really good actions being not pleasing to God. It is true, indeed, that

"Merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

True that we may reckon, from proper feeling and right charity, those things in others as meritorious which may prove to be very different in the sight of God. But good actions, done from supernatural motives, and in the grace of Christ, *are* meritorious, because they are the actions of Christ Himself, by His Holy Spirit working in the souls of His people.

Blessed then, indeed, is sincere repentance, which brings life, and light, and joy, and peace, and comfort, and energy to a soul, once tied and bound by the chains of sin; and blessed is that Sacrament which deepens in so many souls, and gives fulness of effect in so many; and to so many is a real necessity for repentance, which is

life. We may thank God that the evil days have passed away during which this Sacrament was so sadly ignored in our part of the Catholic Church, and I cannot do better than close with the words of that greatest of teachers, greatest of theologians and greatest of God's servants, who was given to our Church, to revive, through his immense learning and deep devotion, sacred and forgotten truths, and this truth above all.

"It is," he writes, "a most precious part of the care of souls, the feeding of the sheep and lambs of Christ. It is our Lord's own office, 'to heal the broken-hearted, and set at liberty those that are bruised.' It is to comfort the afflicted, to relieve the doubtful, to guide the perplexed, to strengthen the weak, to conduct along the narrow way, to teach how to conquer the besetting sin, to rekindle the still smoking flax, to guard against backsliding, or recover those who have gone backward to the ground, to ease the burden of conscience, to bring back the peace of God. These are God's works through His own Ordinance. We have seen it, heard it, felt it, handled it. We saw that it was 'the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes.' In this is our comfort, our hope. He through the Church revived it; He enlarged it; He poured out His grace through it; He continued what He began. To Him be the glory, and thanksgiving, and praise, for ever and ever, as it will be through the souls whom He has saved."

SERMON XXVI.

The Sacrament of Holy Marriage.

“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery (or this Sacrament is a great one); but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”—*EPH. v. 30, 31, 32.*

“For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”—*MATT. XIX. 5, 6.*

It has been said that the Sacrament of Order was instituted to perpetuate the Sacred Ministry, and the Sacrament of Marriage to perpetuate the faithful. By the former, the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ is perpetually secured on earth; by the latter is secured the presence of those who are to be made His members, and to be formed in His likeness. It is thus that these Sacraments have their share in that which is a chief object in all Sacraments, viz. our union with the Second Adam.

I.

Holy Matrimony, we all must feel, is a subject of the highest importance; it has to do with a state of things most common to mankind, and it lies at the root of a

great deal of happiness and a great deal of unhappiness, in this, as well as in another life. The right receiving of this Sacrament, and a faithful fulfilling of its obligations, become abundant sources of peace and happiness, and lead to consequences of the highest importance; whilst disregard to such serious duties is a spring of much misery.

Marriage has always been a contract, but it has not always been a Sacrament. As a contract, and a contract of a very high and sacred kind, it carries us back to the earliest antiquity. We learn from Revelation that God Himself instituted it, when He created our first parents, when He blessed them and told them to increase and multiply, when He gave Eve to Adam, made by Almighty power out of his very substance, and placed those mysterious words, which find their echo in the sayings of our Lord, in the mouth of the first Adam, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they twain shall be one flesh."

Among the dim clouds of patriarchal times, we still find marriage to be a very sacred and serious contract. Among these is the conspicuous instance of Isaac and Rebekah, quoted accordingly in our own marriage service; and then, amongst others, there is the touching love story and marriage of Boaz and Ruth. The same was true also under the Law of Moses; it always remained a serious contract. In all this we see that God Himself was the author and institutor of marriage, and that there came before man, in Holy Scripture and Primitive times, certain teachings as to the fitting

principles connected with it, and as to its final end. God Himself declares that man, whom He created in a special way as His own image, ought not to be alone, but needed the companionship of one like him, yet different. He teaches us also from the primitive institution, the necessity of free choice in entering into the contract. It is from this we learn, as has always been held by the Christian Church, that the efficient cause of marriage is mutual consent, which indeed constitutes its essence. From this comes the union, by which the woman belongs specially and exclusively to the man, and the man specially and exclusively to the woman; a union which ought to be of will, body, and affections, so that in a mysterious and yet true way, *two* become *one*; and that that union is a permanent and indissoluble one. Whatever modifications may have been made in this, as we shall presently see, they are only made through human sin, and in times of insufficient light, and were a serious departure from the Divine intention of this solemn contract; for the object of this contract was right companionship, and the giving life to, and then proper training to, children who in their day and generation were to glorify God.

II.

But further, marriage is a Sacrament, and as such it is acknowledged by the English Church, as well as by the rest of the Catholic Church; to this dignity it has risen through the Incarnation. It is not of course one of the Sacraments universally necessary to salvation, but none the less among the five lesser Sacraments it holds the place, necessarily, of great dignity. It was doubtless

instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. Paul refers to it, as a great Sacrament, and as symbolizing and representing the union of Christ and His Church. Our Lord, however, did not leave on record in the New Testament the actual words and manner of the administration, but guided His Church by the Holy Spirit into appointing and elucidating these. Just as He foretold, or hinted at, His Divine intentions with regard to the other Sacraments before their actual institution, He seems to have done the same with regard to this Sacrament, by His presence at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. Some have thought that this was the actual institution; but be that as it may, the character of the miracle then wrought was highly significant. Our Lord, as His manner is throughout His government of the Church, changed common things to a high efficiency for Divine purposes, and so, at least, showed how marriage has become a much deeper and more sacred thing through the influence of the Incarnation; that it was, in fact, henceforth to be, not a contract only, but also a Sacrament. Marriage then is, a Sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ to strengthen and perpetuate the "Powers of the world to come" in human beings, by giving to those who receive it worthily, the grace necessary to sanctify this relation of life between man and woman, to bring up their children in a Christian manner, if God give them children, and to represent to the world the union of Christ and His Church. Here there is, of course, a visible sign and an inward grace, and an institution for a special purpose coming from the mind of Christ.

III.

We have seen already that theologians represent Sacraments as possessing what is called *matter* and *form*.

1. The *matter* of the Sacrament of Holy Marriage has been believed to be found in the mutual consent or contract by which those who are being married, give to one another power each over the other; and it has been justly noticed that this itself points to the dignity of this Sacrament; for whilst in Baptism the matter is the ordinary creature of water, here it is found in the living temples of the Holy Ghost and in the members of Christ Himself.

2. The *form* of the Sacrament, in the words and signs authorized from time to time in the Church, by which the persons being married express their consent. It has always been held that this consent must have some distinct and recognized expression, and must refer not to some future but to some present time, and must express the consent of both parties. This consent has been usually given by expression in words, and by the joining of hands, and in our own Church, as in other parts of the Church, there has usually been the giving and receiving of a ring as an appropriate and expressive ceremony, though such a ceremony would, of course, not be *essential* to the form of the Sacrament, although *necessary* to its regularity in our own Church.

3. The *ministers* of this Sacrament are the two persons who are being married, who administer it in the valid manner before proper and appointed witnesses. The appointed witness, according to the mind of the Catholic Church, is a Priest of the Church, who is also

empowered to give the Church's blessing to those who enter into this sacred relation. Marriage, therefore, solemnized in a registrar's office between persons against whose marriage there is no canonical bar, is recognized by the Church as a valid Sacrament of Marriage, although certainly *irregular* and not to be encouraged, as likely to be wanting in some blessing through the want of respect shown to the mind of the Church.

4. The effects of the Sacrament of Marriage properly entered into are, to produce its Sacramental graces, the grace of faithfulness, and therefore of deepening affection, the grace of assistance in the Christian education of children, and the grace of indissolubility. These graces are God's special gifts to those who are married, to enable fallen human nature to rise in this respect to His purposes. The first of all duties in a Christian marriage is, of course, faithfulness. The husband and the wife have each given to the other a power which must never be violated. "They two," our Lord says, "shall be one flesh," and the Apostle accordingly distinctly teaches that, "the wife has not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise the husband has not power over his own body, but the wife." Faithfulness to this great obligation is due from each to the other. The blessing of the Sacrament is, to enable the fulfilment of this, by ennobling and strengthening natural love, and by changing it to a pure and supernatural affection like that of our Lord Jesus Christ to His Church. When the grace of marriage is rightly received and rightly used, what might otherwise be a joke becomes a bond that is valued and loved, and turns the cares and anxieties which necessarily must come in married life, into happiness and blessings which only

deepen and strengthen affection. To fallen human nature there is a natural inclination to inconstancy, "never remaining in one stay;" and there are the trials that come from the changes and chances of this mortal life, and by the special grace of God in marriage, there comes strength to bear such, and readiness in excusing mutually, the faults and defects of imperfect creatures, and of holding as sacred, beyond all possibility of discussion or even thought, the solemn promises made at the foot of the Altar.

Thus, when we hear statements made by thoughtless or godless people, or reported in a corrupt literature, as to the impossibility of lasting fidelity between one woman and one man, we have to remember that such statements are made without reckoning with a fact of the first importance, viz. a special gift of the sanctifying grace of God which is offered in the Sacrament of Marriage.

From this grace, faithfully used, there come the recognition and acceptance of all sorts of little duties belonging to those who are married, such as gentleness, respect, and care on the side of the man, and the duty of taking pains to provide for the material wants of his family, and to rule and guide that family with wise Christian *authority*, and not mere tyrannical dominion; and such duties on the part of a wife as obedience and respect, gentleness and modesty, and diligence in guiding the affairs of her household in a fitting manner. To develop the grace of marriage, a Christian husband and wife must, of course, be faithful to the duty of prayer.

And then, again, it is the grace of marriage, when well received and used, that causes the disposition to look upon the gift of children as a real blessing;

and by this, many mothers might be saved from those sinful and corrupt thoughts and actions which have disgraced even our own Christian times. It is by the grace of God that a Christian mother learns to feel, that if the birth of her children gives her suffering, and a Christian father learns to feel that if the existence of his children brings him an added weight of care, that yet by the use of that grace, they become to both a special blessing. Indeed, St. Paul's statement with reference to the Christian mother and the birth of her children, seems to point, in some way, to an especial blessing to the mother who bears children. It may mean, of course, what is stated in our translation, but it may also mean, and has been thought by some teachers at least to include: (1) "she shall be saved by the child-bearing," i.e. by Blessed Mary having borne the Eternal Word, and (2) "she shall be saved by bringing children into the world," i.e. that her sanctification is perfected through the right use of the grace of marriage which enables her to be a loyal wife and mother.

And then, again, there is, of course, the duty resting upon both parents of bringing up children as faithful Christians and as good men and women; the grace of marriage enabling this to be done. Fathers ought especially to remember that they are not freed from this obligation by being bound by other obligations of a more public character. Whilst it is true that the mother has her own especial duties in this regard, especially in the early years of childhood, when she is above all the representative of the Church to the child, and is the chief power for laying the foundation of Holy principles in the soul; still, fathers are far too apt to forget, and very wrongly, that they have their share of duty. As

their children are growing older, no one can take their place, especially in the care of their boys, in guiding the young soul through the critical years of the greatest of changes—except the change of death—the change from youth to manhood. And when, in God's providence, the natural guides of children are withdrawn by death, this serious part of parental duty has to be faithfully remembered and carried out by any who may have to supply their places.

From these considerations it is plain enough to every thoughtful soul how great and blessed and holy a thing marriage is; what wonderful graces are given in it, to assist in the fulfilment of its obligations, and thereby to sanctify the souls of those who rightly enter into a relation so holy and so blessed.

IV.

Marriage being a Sacrament, it forms a tie which cannot be broken except by death. This is plainly evident from Holy Scripture; in the Old Testament, when it was not a Sacrament but a solemn contract, the breaking of the tie was permitted under certain circumstances, but the Mosaic legislation dealt, not with a people who fully knew the will of God, but only with those who were in partial light, and for whom the best was done that could be done under the circumstances, and whose weaknesses, being in "the times of ignorance," were barely endured or "winked at" by God, as the Apostle says. The earliest teachings of Holy Scripture are, however, as we have seen, totally opposed to this; and even the Mosaic legislation, when rightly understood, would appear to be entirely in opposition to

anything like re-marriage after divorce. Indeed, the thing scarcely amounted to what we call divorce, but to "putting away" or "separation." In the New Testament and in the Kingdom of the Incarnation, there is no excuse whatever for divorce. The marriage tie cannot be broken except by death; the only countenance that has been formed for the opposite view is traceable to our Lord's sayings, in which He speaks of a wife not being put away except for one cause, viz. *πορνεία*, translated in our version "fornication," and corresponding to the Old Testament expression "some uncleanness."

This does not give the least countenance to what is commonly called divorce. For (1) our Lord is speaking about the operation of the Jewish law; (2) His reference may be, as some have thought, to sin committed before marriage and concealed; or (3) to what we should call judicial separation. In fact, He is referring to causes known to the Jewish and *not* to the Christian law.

On the other hand, our Lord distinctly and repeatedly teaches, without any reservation whatever, that the marriage tie *cannot* be broken. St. Paul, who speaks on the subject, never makes the faintest allusion to such a reservation, which of course he would have done had it existed, as he received, we know, direct from Jesus Christ the revelation of His will. Further, even in the passages in which our Lord makes the one exception—and which we have seen merely referred to the Jewish law—He Himself emphatically forbids the re-marriage of a woman "put away" from her husband. According to the Christian law, "putting away," or, as we should call it, "judicial separation," is permitted for grave causes, although we know that God "hates putting away;" but though "putting away" may be necessary

and permitted, divorce, or the breaking of the marriage tie, is *never* so. Our Lord distinctly says, "Whoso putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and whoso marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery;" and He also says that "if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Through the corruption of human nature, great evils and unfaithfulnesses in this serious matter crept into the Church. The Eastern Church, probably pressed by the imperial power, gave way to the great sin of disobedience, in a modified form indeed, but still disobedience, to the commands of our Lord and His Apostles. The Western Church, by God's mercy, has always stood firm. There have been cases indeed in it of evasion of the Christian law by allowing cases of "nullity," i.e. cases of annulling the marriage bond, on the ground of its never having properly existed—which were probably unworthy excuses, made from a spirit of worldliness—but the Western Church has never permitted divorce as such. Our own part of the Catholic Church has been especially faithful in this matter; her teaching is quite distinct. She does not allow a loophole for this form of iniquity, and if any of her servants—whether Bishops or Priests—give any countenance to this grave sin, they are guilty of lawlessness and acting directly in the teeth of the emphatic teaching of their Church.

We live, however, in days of "limp" morality and absence of backbone. Some are induced to countenance this form of sin from a morbid and excessive tenderness for those who suffer from ill-assorted marriages. Every one must feel sorrow for suffering, wherever it is, but no

one has a right to countenance sin in order to alleviate it. Society is of more importance than any single member of society, and as individuals we have constantly to suffer for the good of the whole. In former times, the Parliament of England has been induced to do wrong by granting Acts of Parliament in some cases for divorce, but it was not until the year 1857 that it was induced to pass the grossly sinful Divorce Act, which has legalized adultery and opened the door to a vast flood of moral corruption in this country. The State of England has thus placed itself in direct opposition to the law of the Church of Christ. Every citizen must contemplate with great sorrow the grave sin committed by his country, and it is the duty of every believing Christian, and above all of faithful Churchmen, to protect family life in England—on which indeed the glory of England has been built up—from this horrible contamination, and to warn those who have fallen under the temptation to attempt to break the marriage tie, that, however much their adulterous unions may be sanctioned by the State, adulterous unions they *are*, according to the teaching of the Church and of her Divine Master.

Finally, we should all remember the sacredness of human life, and the sacredness of human love; the immense power of God's grace in blessing human love and raising it to noble uses, and in sanctifying and blessing the union of man and woman in that Holy Sacrament of Matrimony which forms a tie that can no more be broken than the indissoluble tie between Christ and His Church. Men and women among us should remember that Holy Marriage is a very lofty vocation, and that the man learns best his duty towards his wife, and the woman her duty

towards her husband, both by remembering the supernatural character of that tie, and keeping before their minds respectively, as models, the temper and attitude of Christ towards His redeemed Church, and of the redeemed Church, the bride of the Lamb, towards her Heavenly Spouse. So is human life sanctified ; so is faithful duty done towards children born into a Christian community ; so is human passion purified and elevated, and made the instrument of noble emotion ; and so may we be trained by the home-life this side the grave, for the home that is to be ours on the farther shore.

SERMON XXVII.

The Sacrament of Unction.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."
—ST. JAMES v. 14-16.

WHEN we consider this Sacrament, our first thought is of our Lord's unflagging consideration for the sick and dying. A great part of His ministry on earth consisted of healing men's bodies, while at the same time He cured the diseases of the soul. Man is not a soul merely, or merely a body. The soul, of course, is the permanent seat of personal life, but man in his completeness is soul *and* body. We are taught in Holy Scripture that when man dies, he is in a waiting state in another world, where those who die in Christ are being cleansed from the stains and remnants of sin and are helped by the prayers of the faithful. But perfection is not attained until the soul is "clothed upon" with the resurrection body. It is, therefore, to be expected that God's dealings with man should be Sacramental, that there should be "outward and visible signs" applicable to the body, as channels of grace to the soul. So it is that our Lord, when on earth, constantly used outward signs in dealing with the sick or sinful.

It is striking, too, how, even in those Sacraments which are not absolutely necessary to salvation, He seemed to foretell them, before they were finally instituted, just as He did with the two great Sacraments, the precise form and matter of which He stated, so that His very words and directions should be recorded in the Gospel.

So it is with this Sacrament. We read that when He sent the twelve out by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits, that "they went out and preached that men should repent, and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

I.

Now here, in St. James, the Holy Ghost through the Apostle gives an explicit command for the use of this Sacrament of Unction or Anointing.

It was evidently instituted, as all the five lesser Sacraments were, according to our Lord's mind, for in the New Testament it is recognized and practised by the faithful.

As to the *matter* of the Sacrament, it is, of course, oil. It has been for long a custom in a great part of the Catholic Church to anoint the organs of the five senses; and it is a beautiful idea, that of restoring the sanctity of soul and body by applying the cleansing merits of Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost, where they would most be needed. The body of the baptized Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It has often been injured by sin, and the soul has often sinned through the attractions of sense which have reached it through these organs of the body. Though this idea is

beautiful, the five anointings are not *necessary* to the integrity of the *matter* of the Sacrament, and in the English Church the direction given is, "then shall the Priest anoint him upon the forehead or breast only, making the sign of the Cross." One unction is of course sufficient.

The *form* of the Sacrament has always been in accordance with St. James's direction—prayer. It was often the custom to say the penitential Psalms, and then some suitable form of prayer. The form in the English Church runs as follows :—

"As with this visible oil thy body outwardly is anointed, so our Heavenly Father, Almighty God, grant of His infinite goodness that thy soul inwardly may be anointed by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of all strength, comfort, relief, and gladness. And vouchsafe for His great mercy (if it be His blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodily health and strength to serve Him ; and send thee release of all thy pains, troubles, and diseases, both in body and mind. And, howsoever His goodness (by His Divine and unsearchable providence) shall dispose of thee, we, His unworthy ministers and servants, humbly beseech the Eternal Majesty to do with thee according to the multitude of His innumerable mercies, and to pardon thee all thy sins and offences committed by all thy bodily senses, passions, and carnal affections ; Who also vouchsafe, mercifully, to grant unto thee ghostly strength by His Holy Spirit, to withstand and overcome all temptations and assaults of thine adversary, that in nowise he prevail against thee ; but that thou mayest have perfect victory and triumph against the Devil, sin, and death ; through Christ our Lord, Who by His death has overcome the prince of

death, and with the Father and Holy Ghost evermore liveth and reigneth God, world without end. Amen."

Such is the matter, such is the form, of this Sacrament.

II.

As St. James directs that the sick person is to send for the Priests of the Church, it has been felt desirable, when possible, to call other Priests to join their prayers with the Priest who administers this Sacrament. This, however, has not been always possible, and in the Western Church, where it has not been possible, the family or relations have been invited to join their prayers with the Priest's, and because prayer is such an essential part of this Sacrament, it has been called "the Sacrament of Prayer."

The usual custom has been in the Western Church that the oil should be blessed by a Bishop, and in the Eastern Church by the Priests, usually seven in number. This custom has probably arisen because oil has always been the beautiful symbol of the Holy Ghost, and because of the gifts of the spirit being seven in number. That is why the sanctuary lamps were always supplied with oil; and, indeed, in early centuries, "sick persons would sometimes send to the church for the Holy oil that was kept there, and we find, from many instances, that oil was particularly valued which was taken from the church lamps, and the lamps of the holy places connected with our Lord's life." But, although these were customs in different parts of the Church, they are evidently not *essential* to the Sacrament. It might be more or less irregular, but it would not appear to be by any means invalid, if only one Priest was able to be

present, and was obliged to bless the oil himself. Indeed, there are instances of dying saints, even laymen, being asked to bless the oil, and of the sick person anointing himself. These cases, however, arising from necessity, were doubtless irregular, though in the early centuries they do not seem to have been considered invalid. To be strictly regular, Priests, not laymen, or at least a Priest, where more than one could not be present, is necessary, in accordance with Church custom and above all with the distinct statement of Holy Scripture.

This Sacrament, of course, is, properly speaking, a "Sacrament of the Living;" it may accidentally become a "Sacrament of the Dead;" that is, although a person in extreme sickness is, according to the Church of England, to be "moved" to make a special confession of his sins to a Priest, and therefore the Sacrament of Penance ought to be used where needed, yet, as it may not be possible for confession to be made, the Sacrament of Unction may supply its place, by wiping out sins through the merits of Jesus Christ, and restoring grace which has been forfeited. We should remember that by a "Sacrament of the Living" is meant one such as Confirmation, or the Blessed Sacrament given to souls already alive in grace, and so intended to *increase* grace; by a "Sacrament of the Dead" is meant a Sacrament such as Holy Baptism, for instance, or the Sacrament of Penance, specially intended to give grace to a soul which has it not, or to revive it in one that has more or less lost it.

III.

This Sacrament is intended to be administered, then, to a person suffering from sickness, for which reason it

has never been given to soldiers going into battle, nor to criminals going to execution; for them, and for all, the Viaticum—the “Food for the journey,” especially for the last journey of all—is the Body and Blood of Christ.

It may be well here to remove a misunderstanding. It has been said that the Roman Church has erred by calling it *extreme* unction, because she allows it only to be administered to those who are *in extremis*, i.e. pretty certain to die immediately. There is nothing gained in misrepresenting any part of the Church from which we are bound to differ in many serious matters, and indeed it is wrong to do so. The Roman Church does *not* command that this Sacrament should be administered only to the dying, and the name *extreme*—which seems unfortunate, as it has been so understood—is given to this unction because it is usually the *last* of the anointings which have been employed by the Church and which are still in use in the Roman part of the Catholic Church. The first of these is given in Baptism, the second in Confirmation, the third in Ordination to the Priesthood, and the last that for the sick, which therefore, because the last of the four, came to be called *extreme*. The reason why it is so often used only for the dying, has nothing to do with the teaching of the Church, but with the prejudices of the people. Many people had a prejudice against being anointed in sickness, because they got an uncomfortable feeling that if the Priest, or Priests, came for this solemn anointing, they must be very ill indeed, and likely to die. Indeed, it was this sort of fear and prejudice which led in great measure, probably, to the unhappy omission of the service in our present Prayer-book. The best Roman teachers are continually warning their people against the danger of

postponing "sending for the Priests" when they are seriously ill, and so losing half the benefit of the Sacrament, or being scarcely in a fit state to receive it when they are actually *in extremis*. The Roman Church, like our own Church, and like the direction in Holy Scripture, teaches that it is for people who are suffering from illness, and not necessarily for those who are dying. It is extraordinary how this misrepresentation has been repeated again and again, and even by eminent persons who, one would have thought, would have taken pains to find out the truth. We must remember, as I have said, that there is nothing gained by the misrepresentation of those to whom we are conscientiously opposed on many serious points. We can well understand how the Sacrament has come to be administered in many cases, though not by any means in all, in the Roman Church, to those who are almost *in articulo mortis*, through the prejudice of the people, because many of us must have known how often, certainly formerly and sometimes even now, poor or uninstructed people have shrunk from the Blessed Sacrament itself being brought to them in sickness, as if it were a kind of death-warrant, and a proof that there was no chance of recovery.

IV.

The intended effects of this Sacrament, then, are comfort—an assistance to the *body* as well as to the *soul*. Bodily as well as spiritual consolation is its object. (1) Its object is to restore health to the body, if it please God; the prayer of faith is intended first, with the administration of the matter of this Sacrament, to contribute to the sick person's cure, just as many were healed by the anointings recorded by St. Mark. This is

taught by the Roman Church, as well as by our own, and Roman theologians testify to the recovery of many devout persons, just as many of us have known recovery from what appeared to be hopeless illness, after the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ.

We have, all of us, considerable trust in medicines when we are ill; but medicines in themselves can cure no one. They are of benefit from God's blessing, because we use such things in the *natural* order, as He has allowed skilled physicians to know to be best for the case. Much more, if we have faith and really believe the teachings of Holy Scripture, should we trust in this Sacrament, as God's appointment in the *supernatural* order; for the human body is a very sacred thing, and health, or the recovery of health, are very important things to be thought of religiously. The use of this Sacrament is not to effect a miracle, but to impart a special grace for the care of the body. It must be received with strong faith in God; trusting Him that He will thereby restore health, if that be the best thing for us, and entire submission to His will, whatever that will may be; and the Church intends it to be received, not merely when death is imminent—though then, of course, if not before—but to be received when the malady is of a grave character. (2) There are spiritual effects. And the Roman part of the Catholic Church herself, warns men that they may be deprived of these by putting off the receiving of this Sacrament until they are in their last agony, and reproves them for doing so.

Through this Sacrament are conveyed precious graces to fortify the soul when the body of the believer is suffering from pain and weakness, to assist to the

exercise of fortitude and patience under the trial of severe illness, or, if so it be, in death; and to obtain a Holy death by the grace of the Spirit, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Here there is given support and consolation, and a pledge of bodily recovery—if it be God's Will—and if not, then of Eternal Salvation.

We may well think with thankfulness, besides the many mercies that God gives us in life by His providential guidance, and the *actual* graces which He bestows upon His people, also, of the *sanctifying* graces which He so abundantly offers us. Of these, what are given in the Sacrament of Baptism, and in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, are absolutely necessary for salvation where they may be had. The graces given in the other five Sacraments are not absolutely for the saving of a soul. This is abundantly evident in the Sacraments of Marriage and Orders, as of course it is not necessary to salvation that every one should be married, or that every one should receive Orders. Though to neglect to receive these Sacraments when desiring to enter on married life, or to become a minister of Christ, would be, in cases of those who knew what they were doing, to commit serious sin; and in the case of the other lesser Sacraments, Confirmation, Penance, and Unction—although not absolutely necessary to salvation—it would appear a grave thing for any one fully instructed and needing the graces offered, lightly to put them aside. This is, of course, in the highest degree, true of Confirmation, which ranks very high indeed as a Sacrament, but it ought to be considered seriously also, by serious persons, of Penance and Unction, so that their consciences should be satisfied that they did not stand in special need of them. For surely no

faithful person would, in a light or thoughtless way, put aside any loving gift of God; and there are, in many cases, very great trials in grave sickness and approaching death.

V.

It cannot but be a subject for very deep regret, that the Office for the Unction of the Sick was not inserted again in our present Prayer-book, after it had been omitted from the Prayer-book of 1552. To omit it seems to have been a very unwise, if not a very wrong, measure. If the Church of England cannot be entirely defended for having done so, there are some excuses which may be put forward for her at the time:—

(1) She had to resist the tremendous pressure of Puritan influences which was brought to bear upon her. That she did resist them, is evident from the determination with which she refused to fall in with many of the suggestions made by the Puritan divines at the Savoy Conference, and from the number of things that were stayed, in spite of them, at that Conference; and the Savoy Fathers may have felt that it was unnecessary to go so far as to reinstate this Office, as they had done so much in the Catholic direction.

(2) It was the great effort of the English Church to *comprehend* as many as possible within her pale, which led to an extent of compromise which was extreme, and which has led to many later troubles, although done at that time with a charitable intention.

(3) It is true that this Sacrament had probably fallen into disuse since the time of the miserable Prayer-book of 1552, when the Exorcism and Anointing in Baptism, and the use of the white garment or chrisom,

together with the Service of the Unction, and some beautiful and teaching ceremonies in Ordination, were omitted; and the Savoy divines themselves may have grown accustomed to this sad omission; and the people had probably completely ceased to realize the sacredness and advisability of the use of this Sacrament. That Prayer-book marks "the extreme point to which the Church of England ever went in the direction of compromise with heretical or half-believing Protestantism, and neither did it, or its revised edition, in 1559, receive any ecclesiastical sanction whatever. Besides:—

(i.) The Church of England has the great advantage of never having pretended to be infallible; she witnesses to the great main truths of the Catholic Faith, in common with the rest of the Catholic Church; but she has, of course, done some things which were unwise, and would have led to some of her people suffering loss; and the omission from the present Prayer-book of the service for this Sacrament, is one of them. Puritan influences coming from those who pretend to be members of the Church, but who really do not hold the Faith, have been her special trial at the time of the Reformation, and since.

Each part of the Catholic Church, owing to the divisions of Christendom, has suffered in this way. It has been noticed that there has been a parallel loss in the Roman Church. The Anglican Church in her Reformation, or rather her last settlement of things, allowed this Sacrament to drop out. The Roman Church in her Reformation in the Council of Trent, allowed the Chalice in the Sacrament to be denied to the laity. There must be a loss in neglecting the teachings of Holy Scripture, and the practice of the Apostles and Fathers, and indeed

of our Lord Himself. The Anglican Church is under loss by her disobedience to Scripture, as to this Sacrament; the Roman Church is under loss by her disobedience to Scripture, as to the administration of the Precious Blood.

(ii.) There is, however, a real authority for the use of the Sacrament, as established in the Prayer-book of 1549. That book—as it has been said by a great historian—“as it issued from the hands of the revisers, was instinct with the spirit of the Catholic Church. It bore no trace of either primitive or contemporary heresy. Based upon Services which had behind them fifteen hundred years of Christian thought, translated into deep and rich English, with rare taste and delicacy, strengthened by the products of the best contemporary learning,” it was brought into close dependence on the authority of Holy Scripture. “It had,” says an eminent liturgiologist, “in the truest sense, originated with ‘Convocation,’ and it was carried through by members of it; and so, was in far stricter reality the work of the Church by representation, than it would otherwise have been.” That it also received the sanction of Convocation finally there can be little doubt, for although we have not a record of debate upon it, yet Edward’s wretched Council, in writing to Bonner, Bishop of London, in the king’s name, asserted that the book was set forth “by the learned men of this our realm, in their Synods and Convocations provincial.” The Council were certainly not above telling untruths if it served their purpose, but, in this instance, there is no doubt they told the truth, because had they not, Bonner, who was a member of distinction, both of the Parliament and Convocation, could have at once refuted them, and he took no exception

to the statements. Another important authority calls this Prayer-book "the noblest monument of piety, of prudence, and of learning, which the sixteenth century constructed." Another great authority says, "this great work was recommended to the nation by the fullest synodical approval of the Church, as well as of the national Parliament, which it is important to remember consisted at that time exclusively of Churchmen." This book of 1549, therefore, is one of the most authoritative documents possessed by the English Church. The Parliament even, which sanctioned the wretched Prayer-book of 1552—a Prayer-book which never had the authority of the Church—speaks of the Prayer-book of 1549 as a "very godly order for Common Prayer, and the administration of the Sacraments, agreeable to the Word of God and the Primitive Church;" and it adds, that any doubts that had arisen about the fashion of it, had arisen "through curiosity, rather than any worthy cause." These "doubts" had really arisen from the pressure of foreign heretics—two of whom could not even speak English—and from the weakness of some members of the Bench, and the treachery of others.

(4) Again, the great and necessary principle that "omission is not prohibition," has been vindicated for the English Church in recent times. This principle, of course, is one of common sense, indeed of necessity, and falls in with the repeated teaching of the Anglican Church given in one form or another, that she had no intention of striking secretly at any custom of the Catholic Church.

The omission, therefore, of the Service of the Sacrament of Unction from the present Prayer-book, does not imply its prohibition. For the Service for the

Visitation of the Sick is a private, not a public Office, and if a faithful believer desired to receive this Sacrament, no faithful Priest ought to refuse it. To say that a Catholic Priest in the Church of England would be obliged to refuse it, would be to say that he was to oppose in a private Office, the wishes of the Faithful, the custom and teaching of the Catholic Church, and the distinct command of Holy Scripture, and would be as absurd as to say that, in ministering to sick people, he was never to use any part of Scripture or any prayers, except the actual parts and prayers put down in the Visitation Service in the present Prayer-book. There is probably not a Priest in England, even those who are tinctured with Protestantism, and who are least loyal to the Catholic Faith, who would dream of being restricted in such a way, in ministering to souls in sickness. It is then the duty of faithful persons—lay as well as clerical, though above all, of course, the Priest of the Church—to think upon and bring home to others the necessity of revived obedience in this matter to the teaching of God the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Scriptures and the Church. Thus Churchmen, and perhaps especially the devout poor, “rich in faith,” will learn to seek the blessing which Christ offers them, and which so long, from unhappy circumstances, has been withdrawn from their view.

Finally, dear friends, we return again to the thought of the considerateness and tenderness of Christ, so illustrated by the institution of this Sacrament, and we do well to remember His own teachings, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

SERMON XXVIII

The Blessed Sacrament.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread : and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is My Body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My Blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.”—1 COR. xi. 23-27.

WE now reach the last and the greatest of the Sacraments : that towards which, we may say, all the others lead up. In the other Sacraments, grace is given ; in *this* Sacrament, not only grace, but the Giver of all grace. Nothing brings home to us in a more remarkable, or in a sadder manner, the greatness of this mystery, than the intense love and the intense hatred with which it has been surrounded ; no controversies have been more bitter or more cruel, than those as to the Blessed Sacrament. No ingenuity has been spared to try and empty it of its meaning ; it would appear as if the Evil one, who had failed in destroying the hopes of the world on the Mount of Temptation and on the Cross, had concentrated his hostility against the greatest blessing offered by God to man, and had tried at least to lessen the effects of

what has been called "the Extension of the Incarnation," if the full benefits of the Incarnation he was powerless altogether to destroy.

I.

In thinking of so grave and large a subject, there are one or two things worth noting :

First of all (1)—it is at least remarkable, and requires to be accounted for, that amidst all the trials and sorrows of Christendom, this striking service has, for nineteen centuries, held its ground. Sometimes with deep devotion, sometimes with less than insufficient reverence, sometimes in great Cathedrals with state and dignity, sometimes in little out-of-the-way churches without proper reverence, still all over the Catholic Church, bread and wine (the wine mixed with water, where men knew what they were doing, in exact imitation of our Lord) have been used ; the same words in different languages have been employed for Consecration ; and even among some who had very insufficient views of their Priesthood, the Priest ordained by the Bishop, and he alone, was allowed to perform the great Act. This is remarkable, and of itself places the Blessed Sacrament in a unique position. Nay, even amongst those who have separated from the Church, as organized by Christ, a shadow of the great Act remained. From time to time their ministers—although without Apostolical authority—have still used the bread and wine with prayer, as a religious service, and doubtless received some blessing, when acting in ignorance and in good faith, although not *the* blessing which has been guaranteed only to the Church of Christ through the appointed Priesthood. No one who thinks of the

history of Christendom—no matter what his beliefs or unbeliefs may be—can permit himself to think lightly of such a rite; it has upon it the mark of a mysterious distinction.

(2) It is more than evident to Christians, that our Lord meant that it should. As we have seen in other Sacraments, so in this. He foretold the mystery before He instituted it. About His language, however, as to *this* Sacrament, there ought to be no reasonable room for mistake. In the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, He is explicit on the subject; His reiterated statements as to the important efficacy of His flesh and blood, cannot be evaded. When His opponents, and even His disciples, were startled and shocked by His statements, He only repeated them in a stronger and more determined manner, and, in fact, then, as He has done since, lost disciples by His uncompromising assertions as to this great mystery.

(3) It is also to be remarked, that while St. John records this *foretelling* of the Sacrament, the other three Evangelists are guided to give the history of the Institution; and St. Paul, who we know received the direct revelation from Christ, gives a full and careful statement, so that his words, for the most part, have been the words used in the consecrating Act throughout Christendom.

II.

There are two aspects of the Holy Eucharist which the Church has always recognized, although they have led to all sorts of controversy.

These two aspects depend chiefly upon one important truth—that truth is the Real Presence. It has been

felt throughout the Catholic Church that the blessing and receiving of bread and wine must have about it something very mysterious, and even awful. There is a certain character of mind which, from whatever cause, shrinks from the supernatural; this character of mind has led a number of men of undoubted goodness to endeavour to lower the doctrine of the Sacrament. In addition to this, in the great upheaval of the sixteenth century, men's minds were violently disturbed; there had been serious abuses, and very sacred things had been used for very wrong purposes, and men—as in times of heat and anger—were careless in distinguishing between what was really true and what was an abuse. “The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ, under the form of bread and wine,” is a Scriptural truth, giving to the Sacrament its meaning and its sanctity. An unfortunate habit had grown up in the Middle Ages, of too precise definition. The outcome of this was, that a part of the Western Church had adopted the term “transubstantiation,” to express the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament; it was an unfortunate term for two reasons. (a) Because it came from, at least, a very doubtful philosophy; it was supposed that everything consisted of *accident* and *substance*, that the *accident* of everything was what we see, feel, taste about it; that the *substance* was the real thing in itself; and what was asserted was this: that in the Blessed Sacrament after Consecration, the *real thing in itself* was the spiritual but real Body and Blood of Christ, while the *accident* was the bread and wine which we actually see and taste. But (b) while “transubstantiation,” understood in this sense, could have nothing offensive or “carnal” about it, it might be, and it has been—by

people who are not familiar with philosophical terms—understood as something quite different. To the unphilosophical mind of the ordinary rough Englishman, *substance* seemed to mean *the whole thing in itself*; and he imagined, as he very often imagines now, that when part of the Western Church talked of transubstantiation, or change of substance, it meant a change of the whole thing, viz. that there was no bread, no wine, but only an appearance of both, and that men were required to believe a “carnal” presence of a “natural” Body and Blood, contrary to the teaching of Scripture and all right reason. It is extremely unfortunate that a part of the Western Church should have committed itself to such a term as “transubstantiation,” which was so certain to be misunderstood.

The reaction against all this was serious. The Zwinglian reformers of the Continent went so far as to deny altogether that the Sacraments were means of grace, but were only proofs of grace that was already given; they point-blank denied Scripture, declared that there was no mystery in the Blessed Sacrament at all, and emptied our Lord’s most solemn words of any real meaning. Those words to them became merely figurative, or metaphorical, i.e. they made our Lord go a long way to prevent people knowing what He meant. The Calvinists did not exactly hold that; like the Zwinglians, they denied that the Consecration by the Priest had any influence whatever with regard to the bread and wine, and that these remained precisely what they were before Consecration; they taught, however, that the Eucharist was more than a commemorative rite, and that there was a benefit to the soul of a faithful receiver when he received the bread and wine. According to

them, whatever Presence there was, was really a subjective influence in the soul, and the Sacramental bread and wine were only signs and tokens, and not channels, of a great gift. These views—which were entirely heretical—destroyed, of course, all idea of Eucharistic worship, and turned what had been the only service appointed by Christ Himself, and what had been the one service of Divine Worship ever since the times of the Apostles, into an exercise of personal piety for a few elect souls.

Among the foreigners who were introduced into England in the time of Edward VI., to the great misfortune of the English Church, such as Peter Martyr, and Martin Bucer, these views were held, and some of the less faithful Bishops, such as Ridley and Latimer, seem to have adopted them. Ridley taught them to Cranmer; but the unfortunate Cranmer, with his unstable mind, seemed to be constantly wavering between these heresies and the truth.

His low views—so strangely contrary to Holy Scripture, both in its tone and its teaching—left their mark upon the English Church. The Church Herself in Her formularies has remained perfectly faithful, but Protestantism has unfortunately found it convenient to adopt views less serious, and demanding less self-sacrifice, than those of the Universal Church, and more in consonance with the natural man.

The doctrine of the Universal Church has always been that, in the great mystery of the Eucharist, there is the Real Presence of the Lord's Body and Blood, under the form of bread and wine; that that Presence depends *not* on the faith or feelings of any who received the Sacrament, but upon the promise of Christ fulfilled

through the power of the Holy Ghost, when claimed in the appointed language by the minister appointed to claim it.

The Church of England is very distinct on this doctrine: in her Catechism, which she appoints for her teaching to the young, she asserts that the inward part of this Sacrament is the Body and Blood of Christ; next she says, that "these are verily and indeed *taken and received*." You cannot, of course, in very truth, take the something that is not there, you cannot receive something that is not given to you. The Church says that this great Gift is given, taken, and received by "the faithful," *i.e.* by baptized Christians, or, as we should say, by Church people; in a matter of this sort, we have nothing to do with questions regarding those who are outside the Family of God. There have been, of course, those who—trying to get out of a difficulty—have gone so far as to say that the "faithful" means people full of faith; this, as everybody who is instructed knows, is inaccurate. The expression, "the faithful," was a perfectly well understood expression, when the Catechism was written, and it means neither more nor less than Church people, as we should say now; but supposing for an instant that it did not mean that, still the Church of England would be faithful to the Faith, for even a person "full of faith" cannot "take" and "receive" what is not there. Our Lord's Presence is there, and the Church of England teaches it, like the rest of the Catholic Church, in the most explicit manner. We must remember, too, that the Church does not ask her children in the Catechism what is the inward grace, as she does in the Sacrament of Baptism, but "what is the inward part or thing signified?" and the answer is,

"the Body and Blood of Christ." She then asks about the "benefit"—so as to distinguish her teaching wholly from Zwinglian and Calvinistic heresy—so as to keep clear the difference between what is called the "*res sacramenti*," and the "*virtus sacramenti*," so as to make it clear that *all* Church people who communicate, receive the "*res sacramenti*," *i.e.* *all* the "faithful" receive the Body and Blood of Christ; but that those only who receive it "worthily," receive it to "the strengthening and refreshing of their souls;" whilst those who receive it without faith and repentance, "eat and drink condemnation." The reason in the one case, a blessing, in the other, a condemnation, is—as the Church of England teaches—that the Body and Blood of Christ are really there, that the Real Presence is a fact. No one can be guilty of desecrating, and no one can receive a benefit from something that is not there at all.

III.

Upon this, as I have said, depend the two aspects of this Great Mystery.

It is intended as a Holy Communion; it is an opportunity for having a common share in that Body and Blood of Christ, His soul and His Divinity, which brings the creature most closely into union with the Creator, by means of the "one Mediator;" and which unites us together in Christ. Holy Communion in some sense or other, no serious Christian who has any elements of the knowledge of Church teaching, can deny. The preparation for Holy Communion is, of course, faith and repentance; and the English Church points out that to make repentance secure, confession to

a Priest should be used when necessary. There has been a tendency, in late and unbelieving times like our own, to make the receiving of Holy Communion the *only* object of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament; this is indeed a very high object, but not the only one, for—(i.) if it were, then a fraction of the Anglican Church would prove to be the only part of the Catholic Church which has held the Truth; which, considering the sins of the Anglican Church, and her laxity and worldliness, is absurd; (ii.) because, as communicating in the Body and Blood of Christ is a personal devotion, such a view would make the one Service that Christ appointed, a narrow and subjective matter. As a matter of fact, the Holy Communion, or the *partaking* of the Body and Blood of Christ, is a most important aspect of the great Mystery; but it is not all. Besides Holy Communion there is the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The great Institution was to enable us to *offer* this Sacrifice; the objections made to this have been sometimes grounded upon ignorance, sometimes upon prejudice, sometimes upon pious mistake. As to the last, men have feared that the Holy Eucharist has been put *instead of* the One Sacrifice offered once for all on Calvary; the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is, in fact, the *presentation* before Almighty God, of that One Sacrifice once offered in blood and sorrow on the Cross; it is not merely done *in remembrance* of Christ, i.e. to make us remember; it is done also “as His Memorial,” to remind—if we may so say—Almighty God of the greatness of our race, through the atoning merits of His dear Son.

As to prejudice, with that, of course, there is no arguing; as long as English people allow themselves to talk the absurdities, or to listen to the absurdities which

are talked about "Popery," there is nothing to be said, except to express a hope that some day they may become more intelligent and reasonable. The question of the Eucharistic Sacrifice has, of course, nothing whatever to do with "Popery:" the Eucharistic Sacrifice is a doctrine of the Gospel, and to neglect it is to neglect the teaching of Christ and His Church.

As to ignorance, it is well known, that when our Lord said, "Do this," His words also meant, "Offer this." We might paraphrase His words, in fact, by saying, "Do this, in making your communion, remembering Me;" and, "Offer this, as My commemoration before the Father." Statements of astounding audacity have been made, to the effect that the Greek word used by our Lord, or used by His Apostles in reporting His words, never means "offer" by itself; hundreds of instances can be given to prove the untruth of such a statement, and the only excuse for its being made, can be found in a prejudice so dense, as to prevent men's eyes from seeing even ordinary grammatical truth.

The only service our Blessed Lord appointed for *worship*, is the service of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; matins and evensong are beautiful services, really the duties of the Priests, though shared, very properly, in our Church by the devout laity; but our Blessed Lord never said, "Hear matins, or go to evensong, as My commemoration before God the Father;" but He did say, "Offer this as My commemoration." Nothing, I suppose, is a sadder proof of the loss of hold upon the supernatural life, and of the miserable half-belief of a degenerated Church, than the comparative neglect of attendance at the only Service which Christ appointed.

It is true that the Anglican part of the Catholic

Church is not quite guiltless in this matter; but it is only fair to allow for her difficulties during the great struggles of the sixteenth century. In spite of all provocation, she still clung to the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; she desired indeed, as was natural, increased communions, and she allowed herself to say—as we see now—things that might have been better left unsaid; but, on the other hand, she never has professed, in herself, to be infallible; but has referred her children to “the whole Catholic Church of Christ;” and when those who are opposed to her teaching, and who are embued with Puritan and half-believing notions, find fault with what they are pleased to call “non-communicating attendance,” *i.e.* the fulfilment of the duty of being present at the Eucharistic Sacrifice—the One Service appointed by Christ Himself—it is well to remember that, with all her difficulties, she commanded all her baptized children to “hear sermons;” that she appointed no sermons to be preached except during the Celebration of the Mysteries, and that she gives no shadows of permission for any one to depart in the midst of the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

The great object of the great Mystery is, then, the receiving of the Holy Communion, and the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; neither would be of any value were it not for the truth of the Real Presence, and to these great Truths our own Church, amid all her faults, or sorrows, has been faithful.

IV.

There are certain names which have been used for the Blessed Sacrament which it is worth our while to remember—

(1) It is called in Holy Scripture the "breaking of the bread." This name came, of course, from the outward sign, and was doubtless meant to remind men of the Bread of Life broken for them in pain upon the Cross.

(2) Again, it was called the Holy Communion, so that men should be reminded that they are partaking—in common—when they receive the Sacrament, of the most Holy Thing, viz. the Body and Blood of Christ.

(3) It is called the Eucharist, or Eucharistic Sacrifice, or Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.

(4) Or, again, in the Western Church, it has been called the Mass; practically speaking, this name—which has been the very common term used in the Western Church—really means much the same as Eucharist. It is merely a handy term to express the Offering of the Sacrifice of the memorial of the death of Christ; nothing but the violence of controversial bitterness could have induced men—supposing that they understood the subject—to write the foolish and irreligious things that they have written about this term.

The fact is, that men are bound to rid themselves of mere *names*, and to try to enter the meaning of *things*; it is quite natural, that those who do not hold the teaching of the Catholic Church, who do not believe that our Lord has ordained ministers to carry on the work of His Priesthood, and to minister before the Divine Life in His power—it is quite natural that these should deny the Sacrifice of the Eucharist; and hate, because they misunderstand, the name of "the Mass," just as they hate, because they misunderstand, other truths of the Gospel; but surely it can scarcely be right, that members of the Catholic Church, whether Bishops,

Priests, or laymen, should shrink from faithful statements of Divine revelation, such as have been embodied in the terms used by the Catholic Church, to express the mind of our Lord. It is the duty of every Christian, on Sundays and Holydays, in so far as he can, to "show the Lord's Death till He come," as the one act of worship appointed by our Lord. He may call that by what name he pleases; "non-communicating attendance" (a foolish modern name, not belonging to the Catholic Church); or "attendance at the Holy Eucharist (a perfectly good name, though coming from Eastern sources); or "being present at the Holy Sacrifice" (a roundabout name, but perfectly true); or, "hearing Mass" (a short, sensible name, and entirely Western). They all mean precisely the same thing; people may use which term they please; the important thing is, they should be faithful to the *fact*; that if therefore English Catholics, they should take care to remember that they can only worship God as God has appointed His worship, while taking their part in the Great Sacrifice, offered once for all on Calvary, but presented again and again by a truly ordained Priest in union with God's creatures on the altars of the Church.

(5) There is another name by which the Blessed Sacrament has been known, and that is, "the Lord's Supper." This name has gained an unfortunate force in the English Church, by the title given to the Communion Service in the last Prayer-book. This title came, undoubtedly, from Puritan influences; it is quite unscriptural. St. Paul, in alluding to a "Love Feast," or Christian breakfast, *after* the reception of the Holy Communion, probably spoke of it—when reverently observed by poor and rich together, after they had

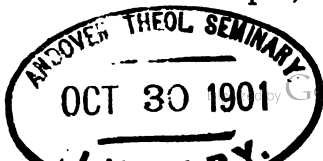
received their Communion—as a “Lord’s breakfast.” To talk of the Blessed Sacrament as a “Lord’s Supper,” as if that were a Catholic term, is not accurate, and it has led to some unfortunate misunderstandings.

V.

There is no Catholic custom more thoroughly established than that of fasting communion. Our Lord Himself speaks, as we know, of fasting in the way He speaks of prayer. The whole question of fasting, especially in modern times and in northern climates, is undoubtedly difficult; but, without entering upon this question, there has been one fast which the Church on the whole has widely respected, viz. the fast before communion. The notion of the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament being “the Lord’s Supper,” has led people to make light of this fast: upon this has followed a very sad and dangerous custom, found occasionally in England among those upon whom Catholic belief sits lightly, viz. the unhappy custom of evening communions. Persons try to justify this by saying that our Blessed Lord administered the Blessed Sacrament “after supper;” and this is an argument that tells very strongly upon the minds of pious and uninstructed persons.

We ought to remember, however, that if this argument has any force in it, it would appear a curious thing that the Church never discovered it until quite recent times, and that then the discovery has been made by a very small part of the Church, and that most given to laxity—here in England.

And, again, it is quite certain that the “supper,” of which the Lord partook with His disciples, was



altogether exceptional in its character, just as those who partook of it were very exceptional persons. That "supper" was, in fact, a very serious religious rite; it was the winding up of the old dispensation by Him "Who fulfilled all righteousness." There can be no serious comparison made between taking part in it, and modern Christians taking part in an ordinary meal; the old dispensation was wound up in the partaking of the Paschal Supper, and the Paschal Rite was itself developed there and then, by the Divine Master Himself, and not in the presence of any lay person, or of a general congregation, but only in the presence of the Apostles, into the full reality of the Blessed Sacrament. They may be said, in fact, to be two Divinely appointed rites merged into one. The moment we think of it, there is no real ground whatever for speaking of the Holy Sacrament as at first received, following on what we should call a "supper," or an ordinary meal at all.

This, indeed, was seen and settled by the Church of Christ long ago. She has held and taught that, under the form of bread and wine, when duly consecrated by an ordained Priest, there is a mysterious, real, and spiritual presence of the Body and Blood of Christ, to be received at proper times in communion by Christ's people with repentance and faith, for "the strengthening and refreshing of their souls;" to be presented before God as a "perpetual remembrance" of the one sacrifice of our Lord upon the Cross; to be the one great act of worship of the whole Church; to be offered in the morning hours; and when received by the faithful, to be received with fasting and prayer.

When we think, as I have said, of the Sacraments of the Church—whether the two greater ones, or the

lesser five—we see an analogy or likeness between God's dealings with us in religious matters, and His dealings with us in what may be called ordinary things. The Sacraments are means to ends; they have not *magic* in themselves, but they are vehicles of *power* for those who use them rightly. This Sacrament, above all, should remind us of the love of Christ, and we should treat it with the greatest reverence. When we think of its depth of meaning, when we think of all that our Lord underwent to leave us so great a blessing, we may exclaim with St. Paul,¹ "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

¹ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

SERMON XXIX.

The Sorrows and Hopes of the Church.

"Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace. I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle."—Ps. cxx. 5-7.

AN occasion like this, when we commemorate your great Saint, and recollect the great work that has been done in this Church in the past, and that is being done by God's mercy now, throws us back upon first principles.¹

We cannot but think of the sorrows and hopes of the Church, and of her unending struggle with "the world." These are placed before us, as so often, by the words of Holy Scripture, in the text.

Critics undoubtedly differ about the authorship and times of particular psalms; but there is high probability, from the teaching of some important critics, that this psalm is the first of a group which represents the pilgrim songs of the captives of Israel. These poor pilgrims who are journeying from the land of captivity towards the Holy City, sing their "songs of degrees;" that is, supposing such an interpretation to be the right one, the songs of those who are ascending from the land of slavery to the home of freedom. They "lift up their eyes to the hills from whence cometh their strength."

¹ Preached at St. Albans, Holborn, on St. Albans Day, 1898.

They cry "out of the deep" of their sorrow and dejection to the One Who can help them. They feel the trouble of the moment; they are bravely and steadily looking on to the rest of Zion.

The strange and complete scattering of the chosen people was, as we know, the result of serious sin; but it has been truly said, that in those who repented and were faithful, the degree of their fidelity was the measure of their suffering. The misery of their lot was undoubtedly enhanced—so it has been pointed out—by the prosperity of faithless brethren, who made treaties with the world, and so what is called "got on."

The prophets and sweet singers of Israel had been stern and uncompromising in the day of Israel's prosperity; but when God's people were in trouble, they spoke with real voices of comfort. They had kept alive hope—a Divine hope—in their own hearts, and so they succeeded in keeping alive serious and religious hope in the hearts of the nation.

A less bitter time came at last. The oppressors of the captives were more reasonable and thoughtful. The captives turned their faces towards the Holy City; first, doubtless, one by one, then in small groups, then in larger bodies; but the inspired poets or prophets had expressed their feelings in pilgrim songs, suitable certainly to the later days of their captivity, and then the earlier settlements of the chosen people in Jerusalem.

Among these pilgrim songs is the beautiful psalm from which the text is taken. At least this is probable. The pilgrims are passing across the desert; they are looking beyond the long line of the Abarim, and hoping for the sacred city. Wild tribes are always interfering with them on their journey—such is the poet's thought; *they*

are thinking of God and Jerusalem; *they* might make terms with such tribes if they give up Religion; if they join the money-loving worldliness of the one sect, or the predatory fanaticism of the other. But they refuse to do it. All that the pilgrim asks for is fair treatment and a chance of peace; and when he asks for peace, "they make them ready for battle."

Mesech and Kedar are, one must believe, symbolical names. Mesech is spoken of in the Bible as one of the early patriarchs, and then afterwards the name is used again and again; but the important thing to notice is this, that when one of the greatest prophets launched his anathemas, as prophets in those days dared to do, against the greatest "city of the stranger," he spoke of Mesech as trading in the souls of men and vessels of brass; in other words, as a representative of commercial indifference either to the sufferings of man or the claims of God. Mesech, then, means for us the commercial, the money-loving, the business-like "world," caring nothing whatever about the Kingdom of God.

Kedar is spoken of as the son of that wild race of the desert whose history has been tracked here and there throughout the Holy Scriptures. Then we find among the great prophets the name used of those who, with careless lawlessness in a wild, nomadic life, have been utterly indifferent to Religion.

And so always, Holy Scripture points, under the use of these two names, at worldly ways: money-seeking without regard to God—disregard of God, in fact; hatred, in fact, of God and of His people; contempt of the Supernatural—which is, of course, the real life—and opposition to Holy peace. Mesech and Kedar are still alive, they are not dead. The sincere Christian in his pilgrimage has to reckon with them still. But it is well

for us to remember the serious and highest meaning of the words of the text.

(1) For us, it may, of course, mean the cry of impatient despair. This, dear friends, is wrong. Why? Because it is not merely in *our* age that the gospel of Christ, Catholic Christianity, is assaulted by the contemptuous sneers of philosophers, by the irreligion, or half-beliefs, or ignorance, or stupidity of well-intentioned but uninstructed Christians, or by political impertinences and insincerities. No; this does not happen merely in *our* times.

Nor, again, is ours the only age in which the Church has suffered from the cowardice, or worldliness, or unbelief of those in the higher ranks of the clergy; or from the easy-going feebleness and carelessness of those who are not in the highest ranks.

No, this has not happened only in *our* time.

Nor is it only in *our* time that the Church has been a victim to fanatical violence, or to corrupt varieties of public opinion.

Think of the barbarian invasions, of the sorrows of the Church in Africa; of the assaults of Mohammedanism, or of the worst sad days of the French Revolution. Think of the trials of the Church from Alexandrian philosophy; think of the days of Arianism, when there was scarcely a Catholic Bishop to be found; think of the dangerous scepticism of the Middle Ages; or think of the dark days, the darkest days of all, perhaps, of the tenth century, of the time when the first See in Christendom was a horror and a disgrace.

Or think again of our own times, of Puritan ascendancy, when throne and altar were alike overthrown; or of the Christian deadness of last century. In spite of all these things, the Catholic Church survives, and Catholic truth

has revived again. The Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church are indestructible. Think of these facts, if you are inclined to say, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar," in the spirit of an impatient despair.

(2) Or it may be a cry of indignation, and even of just indignation. Why should not the pilgrims have been protected by Chaldean power, or supported more generously by their own brethren? Why not, indeed? But though the indignation might be just, for Christians at least, it would be scarcely reasonable. Political violence, intellectual arrogance, immoral dislike of the restraints of Christianity, and that hatred of the supernatural so deep in the heart of fallen man, these things have been, are, and will be. We are on the pilgrim path; we must expect to dwell with Mesech, and have our habitations among the tents of Kedar.

(3) For, after all, it may be a cry, and it ought to be a cry of an unconquerable Hope.

We are in the pilgrim path. We long to enjoy the peace of Christ; the peace to the mind, to the conscience, to the soul, yes, and the peace to His Church which He alone can give. The very conditions, however, of such peace, are battle. We have not settled down with Mesech and Kedar; we are and we must be, if we are sincere, Catholic Christians between the Scylla and Charybdis of a restless and unbelieving world; but there is a rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Let us remember that, externally, in our own days, if we are true to the faith, we are exposed to two dangers. (1) There is certainly the danger of the exclusive spirit of extreme Romanism. That, as we have seen in our own time, has hindered the fulfilment of our Lord's desire for the re-union of His Church.

That has led to insidious attacks upon believing Catholics, and has reminded us sadly enough of the times of the Arian struggle.

(2) And there is the danger of wild and fanatical Protestantism. This arouses, alas! a spirit which leads men to think that noise and confusion can advance the cause of Christ; which creates a corrupt public opinion, shown sometimes in the reactionary Paganism, too evident in much of our modern education; sometimes in the noisy and insulting disturbance of worship with which we have all been only too familiar of late.

And then there is a danger from within. We are in danger of allowing a wrong *temper*. We need more and more of all that leads to the fruits of the Spirit. In the great tomb at Innsbruck, perhaps you may recollect, the representation of Imperial Majesty is surrounded by stately standing figures. The Christian soul is surrounded by figures still more stately. There are Faith, Hope, Charity; these, again, are supported by the seven gifts, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Ghostly Strength, Holy Fear, and True Godliness. And like the lesser adornments of the tomb, and yet adornments of beauty and even necessity, there are Love, Joy, Peace—towards God; Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Trustiness—towards man; and towards the soul itself, Self-restraint. We must beware ourselves, in trying times, of any dangers from within which may injure these real powers.

And so, I say, in conclusion, really repeating the advice of a dear and great teacher who is gone, Do not give way to panics. It is of course easy to denounce them if we are perfectly indifferent; calmness, I think he taught us, is a cheap virtue when there is nothing at stake; and the panic of an utter fanatic is really

better than the calmness of men entirely indifferent to truth. But there is a calmness which ought to be ours, coming from entire trust in God; "in Te Domine speravi non confundar in æternum."

And, again, in times of trouble or anxiety, do not fly to worldly weapons. Be more earnest in prayer; more self-sacrificing, more attentive in offering the great Sacrifice of the Altar. Remember Talleyrand's advice; he was indeed an apostate, but he was an acute man, and when the young enthusiast, carried off his feet by his own conceit, sought his advice how to make a religion to take the place of Christianity, and to help mankind—Talleyrand said, with his clear view of the necessities and possibilities of souls, "Oh, you would found such a religion, would you? The first thing is, then, go and be crucified and rise again the third day." Yes, self-sacrifice and prayer, these are our powers.

And then, seek for peace—peace coming out of faithfulness to truth; seek for peace; and if Mesech and Kedar will not have it, then Mesech and Kedar must go their own way. Turn your cry of "Woe is me," into the cry which follows it, "My help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth." "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Take the advice of my dear friend who is gone, the greatest, as I think, of modern poets:—

"Never turn your back, but march breast forward,
Never doubt that clouds will break,
Never dream, though right is worsted, wrong will triumph.
Hold, you fall to rise,
Are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

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